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13th Edition

SWR

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DAYTON HAMVENTION 2026

Inside amateur radio's most iconic gathering

THE ECHO OF A GOOD NET

WHEN A FREQUENCY BECOMES A
COMMUNITY

2026

Dayton Hamvention
Special Supplement

inside

AMATEUR RADIO
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THE UNITED STATES ON THE AIR

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Introduction

On the Cover

It once again proves why it is considered the most important gathering in the world of amateur radio. The cover image captures hundreds of ham radio operators walking through the event halls, observing the latest innovations in radios, SDR, antennas, digital modes, and new technologies that continue transforming ham radio.

Beyond the equipment and product launches, the cover reflects the true heart of Hamvention: the community. Operators from different generations and countries sharing knowledge, experiences, and the same passion for communicating and experimenting.

Hamvention 2026 reminds us that amateur radio has always evolved

alongside technology, without ever losing its human essence. Between tradition and innovation, the spirit of ham radio continues looking toward the future.



SWR Magazine

INSTITUTIONAL MESSAGE

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SWR Magazine
Connecting Passions. Inspiring Operators

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SWR Magazine

Connecting Passions, Inspiring Operators

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Amateur radio reminds us that, even in a world full of noise, a simple signal can cross mountains, oceans, and invisible borders.

DXE-3X10 SkyHawk

Efficient directional performance for HF without complications



The DX Engineering DXE-3X10 SkyHawk is a directional Yagi antenna designed for the 20, 15, and 10 meter bands, specifically aimed at HF operators looking for solid performance in DXing and contesting. Its computer-optimized design provides over 7 dBi of gain across all bands, along with an excellent front-to-back ratio that significantly improves directivity and rejection of unwanted signals.

One of its strong points is its construction: lightweight, wind-resistant, and with virtually zero torque on the mast, making it ideal for moderate tower installations without the need for complex support systems. It also uses corrosion-resistant materials and stainless steel hardware, ensuring long-term durability.

In practice, it is a “plug-and-play” antenna: it requires no fine tuning after assembly, which makes installation easier even for radio amateurs with less experience in directional antennas. In summary, the SkyHawk 3X10 is an excellent option for those who want to step up to an efficient, reliable, and relatively easy-to-install triband beam, with a very attractive balance between performance and complexity.



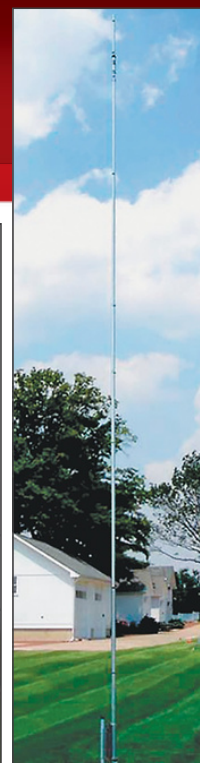
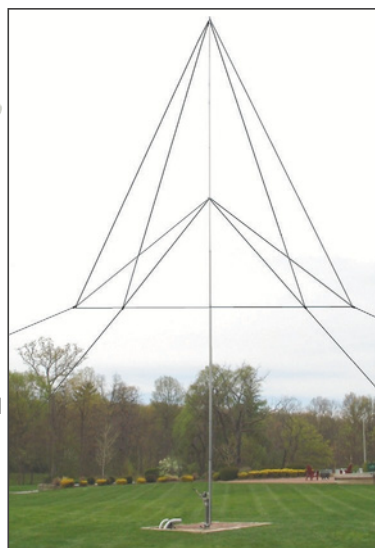
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EDITORIAL

ONE YEAR LATER... WE'RE STILL CALLING CQ



Photo by: truckcamperadventure.com

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Just a year ago, SWR Magazine was born as a simple idea. A small, humble magazine, written in a single language and created solely from the desire to share our passion for amateur radio. There were no guarantees of success, no major resources, no complex marketing strategies. There was only one conviction: that there was still a need for a space where ham radio operators could meet, learn, be inspired, and feel part of something greater. Today, one year later, it is truly impressive to look back and see how much everything has changed. The magazine has transformed. What began as a modest publication is now distributed in three languages, reaching readers in different parts of the world. Our website has become a widely visited meeting point for ham radio operators from multiple countries. New contributors continue joining with each edition, bringing knowledge, experiences, and perspectives that greatly enrich every published page. Subscribers keep growing steadily and, little by little, sponsors are beginning to see SWR Magazine's enormous potential. And perhaps most incredible of all, we have achieved this while keeping our subscription completely free.

I am often asked: "How did you make it happen?"

The truth is that many times I don't exactly know how to answer. Perhaps the answer is the same reason I pick up a microphone almost every day to call CQ. Maybe it all comes from that overwhelming passion for amateur radio that many of us feel and that is difficult to explain in words. That constant need to communicate, to discover new voices, to learn something new in every contact, and to build friendships that cross borders, languages, and cultures.

Perhaps it is also connected to the desire to tell stories. Because amateur radio is full of them. Stories of improvised antennas, of unforgettable contacts, of long nights at the radio, of experiments, of failures that teach, and of achievements that feel as exciting as the very first QSO. Or maybe, simply, SWR Magazine exists because it represents a way of giving back to the hobby a little of all the satisfaction it has given us over the years. Every article received, every message of support, every person who shares the magazine, and every new reader who subscribes reminds us that this project has never belonged to just one person. SWR Magazine truly belongs to the entire ham radio community that has chosen to believe in it.

That is why, as we celebrate this first anniversary, the only thing I can say is: thank you. Thank you to our readers, contributors, sponsors, and friends around the world for making this dream possible. And thank you as well to amateur radio, that wonderful hobby that continues to unite us in ways that very few pastimes can achieve.

We will keep moving forward. We will keep telling stories. We will keep learning. We will keep growing.

And, of course... we will keep calling CQ.

ADVANTAGES OF THE YAGI ANTENNA IN SATELLITE COMMUNICATIONS

PRECISION AND EFFICIENCY IN SPACE

OPERATING VERSATILITY

DIRECTIONAL PERFORMANCE

The Yagi antenna concentrates energy into a narrow beam, significantly improving reception and transmission to low Earth orbit satellites.

CLEANER SIGNAL

Its high directivity reduces interference and improves the signal-to-noise ratio, enabling more stable contacts during satellite passes.

ADAPTABLE TO MULTIPLE BANDS

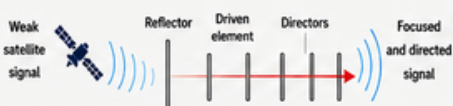
It works efficiently on VHF and UHF, key bands for amateur radio satellites.

VHF UHF

ACCURATE TRACKING

Although it requires rotation or manual tracking, its performance makes it an essential tool for satellite operations.

YAGI ANTENNA OPERATING PRINCIPLE



CONCLUSION

The Yagi antenna remains one of the most effective options for satellite communications, combining gain, directivity, and operational simplicity in an ideal format for amateur radio operators.

KEY BENEFITS



HIGHER GAIN:
better reception and transmission



LESS INTERFERENCE:
cleaner and more stable signal



SIMPLE CONSTRUCTION:
affordable and easy to install



PORTABLE AND LIGHTWEIGHT:
ideal for mobile operations



IDEAL FOR LEO SATELLITES:
improved performance in low Earth orbit



Photo by: chelegance.com



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70 cm BAND
UHF ANTENNA



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- ✓ Rugged, reliable construction

220L6

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NOTICIAS DEL MUNDO

ARISS Studies Future Amateur Radio Communications from the Moon

The ARISS program continues moving toward the future of amateur space exploration by studying possible amateur radio communication systems from the Moon. The initiative, presented during Hamvention 2026, aims to integrate amateur radio into future lunar missions related to the Artemis program. The concept includes voice links, digital modes, SSTV, and other experimental technologies that could be used from lunar infrastructure in the coming years.

If implemented, these future communications would allow ham radio operators around the world to make historic contacts beyond Earth's orbit, marking a new era for space-based amateur radio and amateur technological innovation. This development has generated great enthusiasm within the international community due to its potential educational and scientific implications.

The JARL celebrates 100 years of history and service to the global amateur radio community



Amateur Radio
in Japan 1927-2027

100th
Anniversary

In 2026, the Japan Amateur Radio League (JARL) commemorates its centennial, marking 100 years of contributions to the development and strengthening of amateur radio in Japan and around the world.

Founded in 1926, JARL is one of the largest and most respected amateur radio organizations on the planet. Over the course of a century, it has promoted technical education, advocated for radio spectrum protection, and fostered international cooperation among radio operators. It also represents Japan before the International Amateur Radio Union (IARU). As part of this historic celebration, special activities, commemorative stations, and events are expected, highlighting Japan's role in the evolution of modern amateur radio. The news has generated great enthusiasm among operators worldwide, who recognize JARL's influence in areas such as DXing, digital technology, and innovation in equipment and antennas.

JARL's centennial not only honors its legacy but also reaffirms the spirit of collaboration and international friendship that has characterized amateur radio since its beginnings. For thousands of ham radio operators, this celebration represents a well-deserved tribute to an institution that has left an indelible mark on the history of the hobby.



NOTICIAS DEL MUNDO

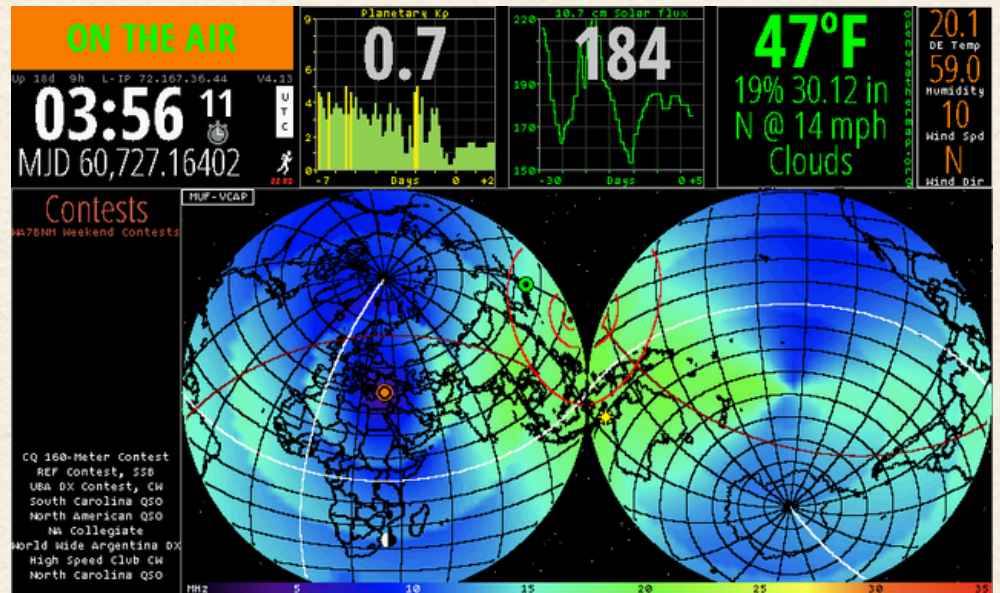
The United Kingdom will say farewell to historic longwave transmissions

The United Kingdom is preparing to say farewell to historic longwave transmissions after more than nine decades of continuous service. This decision marks the end of an era in broadcasting, where frequencies such as 198 kHz were essential for national coverage and public information across the country.

The move has generated reactions within the ham radio and radio enthusiast communities, who recognize the technical and historical value of these signals that accompanied multiple generations. Despite their shutdown, special events and commemorative broadcasts are expected to take place to honor their legacy.

The closure symbolizes a definitive transition toward digital systems and new communication technologies in the United Kingdom, leaving an important mark on the history of global radio. This development has also reopened the debate about the value of traditional broadcasting versus modern transmission systems.

El legado de Elwood Downey, WB0OEW, sigue vivo en HamClock



It has been several months since the passing of Elwood Downey, WB0OEW, the brilliant developer of the popular HamClock software, but his legacy remains very present in thousands of ham radio stations around the world.

Downey created one of the most useful tools for the modern shack, integrating into a single display information on propagation, solar activity, DX spots, grayline maps, satellites, and much more. His software became an indispensable resource for operators of all experience levels.

Following his passing in January 2026, the international ham radio community quickly reacted to preserve his work. Various projects and alternative servers have emerged with the goal of keeping HamClock operational beyond its originally scheduled shutdown date in June 2026. More than just a program, HamClock represents the spirit of service and generosity that defines amateur radio. Although Elwood is no longer with us, his contribution continues to assist thousands of operators around the world every day.

Elwood Downey, WB0OEW, is a Silent Key, but his legacy continues to keep time in ham radio shacks across the globe.



Photo by: Reddit

The Echo

OF A GOOD NET

By: Jose M. Candelaria NP4ET

When a Frequency Becomes a Community

There was a time when, as night fell, a specific frequency on 70 centimeters came alive. The Caribbean Amateur Radio Group repeater on 448.300 MHz became a meeting point for dozens of ham radio operators who, from different corners of Puerto Rico, gathered to share knowledge, news, announcements, and, above all, friendship.

For years I had the privilege of serving as Net Control for that weekly gathering. More than simply managing a list of call signs, my purpose was to create a space where everyone felt part of something special. I have always believed that a net does not belong to the club that sponsors it, nor to the operator who runs it. A net belongs to all ham radio operators who decide to press the PTT and take part.

Each night brought something new. We shared updated information about the world of amateur radio, discussed technical topics, announced club activities and events, and kept the door open for each participant to share their experiences, concerns, or simply talk with friends. Some spoke about antennas, others about contests, others about newly acquired equipment. And sometimes, the topic was as simple as describing how the day had gone.

That was precisely the secret of its success: participation.

What is a Net?

In amateur radio, a net is an organized gathering of operators on a specific frequency and at a set time. It can take place on HF, VHF, UHF, repeaters, or even through digital modes such as EchoLink and D-STAR.

The word “net” comes from “network.” In essence, it is a human network of ham radio operators connected by a common frequency.

Nets can serve different purposes, including:

- Technical information exchange
- Emergency coordination
- Operating practice
- Fellowship and conversation
- Education and mentoring for new operators

A Bit of History

Nets emerged in the early years of amateur radio. As far back as the 1920s and 1930s, operators around the world organized regular schedules to exchange messages and coordinate radiotelegraph traffic.

During World War II and later in disaster situations, nets proved their value as structured communication tools. Organizations such as the American Radio Relay League (ARRL) formalized traffic networks that remain active to this day.

With the arrival of VHF and UHF repeaters, local nets flourished, becoming an essential part of amateur radio culture.

The Soul of a Net

There are highly structured nets, especially those dedicated to emergencies and formal traffic handling. However, the most memorable nets are often those where discipline and spontaneity find a perfect balance.

A good net should:

- Give everyone an opportunity to participate
- Promote respect and courtesy
- Share useful and up-to-date information
- Include educational and technical topics
- Create a welcoming environment for both beginners and experienced operators

A net in which participants only state their callsign and remain silent fulfills a basic function. But a net



where each person can express themselves, ask questions, and share knowledge becomes a true community experience.

More Than a Check-In Round

In those years, many used the net to test a newly installed antenna, check the performance of a new transceiver, or evaluate the coverage of a repeater. Others took the opportunity to announce club activities, coordinate field outings, or comment on news from the ham radio world.

Each transmission added a piece to the collective mosaic of knowledge and experience. And without even realizing it, beyond exchanging signals, we were strengthening friendships.

When the Net Goes Silent

Today, that net is no longer on the air. The frequency is still there. The repeater remains available. The radio waves have not disappeared. But the familiar sound of voices, greetings, and conversations has been suspended in memory.

That does not mean it has ended forever. In amateur radio, as in life, frequencies can fall silent for a while, but there is always the possibility of hearing them come alive again with new voices and renewed enthusiasm.

The Importance of Reviving Nets

In an era dominated by social media and instant messaging, nets remain irreplaceable. They provide:

- Real operating practice
- Evaluation of radios and antennas
- Mentorship for new operators

- Dissemination of relevant information.
- Strengthening of the sense of community.

A well-run net can inspire new amateur radio operators, encourage technical experimentation, and keep alive the tradition of fellowship on the bands.

A Frequency, Many Voices

I still remember those nights when 448.300 MHz filled with enthusiasm, learning, and friendship. Each callsign represented a person with stories, knowledge, and a desire to share.

That is what a net should be.

Not an empty formality.

Not a simple roll call.

Not a monologue from Net Control.

A net should be an open, respectful, and enriching conversation, where every participant has a voice and where amateur radio is experienced in its most human dimension.

Maybe Tonight

Perhaps, somewhere, a new operator is listening for the first time and waiting for an opportunity to identify.

Perhaps another is adjusting an antenna and needs to confirm that their signal is getting through clearly.

Perhaps a veteran wants to share decades of experience.

And perhaps, at any moment, someone will once again say:

“CQ Net, CQ Net. Good evening and welcome all...”

And when that happens, the frequency will stop being just a number on the dial.

It will once again become what it was always meant to be:

A community united through radio waves.



Using an Improvisation Technique to Improve Your QSOs

By: Mark Rosneck, KBOUS



There are moments when a quick contact is exactly what we are looking for, and that is perfectly fine. But developing the ability to sustain interesting and meaningful QSOs is also an important skill, especially in areas such as emergency communications (EmComm), where clarity, understanding, and human connection are essential.

Although it may feel uncomfortable at first, going beyond the basics can be enormously rewarding. At best, it can lead to lifelong friendships. At the very least, it makes every contact more human.

At some point during a routine contact, you have probably noticed how quickly a QSO can fall into a familiar rhythm: name, QTH, signal report, weather... and then silence.

As ham radio operators, we possess extensive technical knowledge and extraordinary tools that allow us to communicate around the world. However, many of us still struggle to go beyond superficial exchanges and achieve truly meaningful conversations.

Shouldn't we aspire to something more?

After all, we already share a common point with the person on the other side of the frequency. It is a better starting point than beginning a conversation with a stranger at a party.





**Your goal is not to impress.
It is to make the other operator shine.**

What does 'Yes, and...' mean

In improvisational theater, the concept of "Yes, and..." is a fundamental principle used to build conversations collaboratively.

It is not just a technique. It is a way of thinking.

In essence, it means:

"Yes" → Accept what the other operator is offering

"And..." → Add something meaningful to continue the interaction

Applied to amateur radio, this simple idea can transform a QSO from a static exchange into a dynamic conversation.

Accepting the Offer ("Yes")

In a QSO, a "proposal" can be anything your contact shares: a comment, a detail, a question, or an experience.

Instead of responding with something minimal, take a moment to truly accept what the other person is offering.

For example:

"Today I'm activating a new park for POTA."

A typical response could be:

"Excellent, you're coming in strong here."

But applying the "Yes" completely changes the interaction:

"That sounds fantastic! I hope you have good weather over there."

That small change shows genuine interest and encourages the conversation to continue.

Building the Conversation ("And...")

After accepting the proposal, the next step is to add something that keeps the QSO moving forward.

For example:

"That sounds fantastic! I hope you have good weather. We had rain all weekend during Field Day this year."

Or:

"That sounds fantastic! How long did it take you to set everything up?"

By adding a question, a personal experience, or a related detail, you create space for the other operator to respond. This allows the conversation to continue naturally.

Overcoming Common Challenges

Many operators hesitate to extend their QSOs simply because they do not know how to do it.

The best signal in amateur radio will always be a friendly voice on the other side of the frequency.

The “Yes, and...” approach offers a simple structure to follow.

If someone mentions their location, you could respond:

“Yes, and... is it as beautiful this time of year as people say?”

If they mention new equipment:

“Yes, that’s an excellent rig. What made you choose that model?”

Your goal is not to impress. It is to make the other operator shine.

With practice, this type of response becomes natural.

Cartoonist Scott Adams once pointed out that most people feel a certain degree of insecurity when meeting someone new.

That observation applies perfectly to amateur radio.

Your goal during a QSO should not be to impress, but to make the other operator feel comfortable and engaged in the conversation.

In other words:

Help them become a great conversationalist.

You do not need to be extremely witty or extraordinary. You only need to be curious.

Ask questions. Listen actively. Show interest.

People naturally respond to that.



Conclusion

The “Yes, and...” approach offers a simple but powerful way to improve your QSOs.

It transforms routine exchanges into meaningful conversations, builds confidence, and strengthens the human side of amateur radio. Whether you are on a repeater, activating a park, participating in EmComm, or joining a roundtable, this technique can elevate every conversation. Because in the end, amateur radio is not just about signals. It is about human connection.

Author's Note

Mark Rosneck, KB0US, obtained his first license in 1967 as WN8YNQ and has been an ARRL Life Member for more than 50 years. His professional experience includes electrical engineering and semiconductor marketing.

Contact: emblongmont@gmail.com

DXpediciones

DXpeditions remind us that distance is never a limitation, but an invitation. Every weak signal that crosses oceans is the result of preparation, patience, and shared passion. In every contact there is more than radio: there are people connecting invisible worlds with the power of curiosity and the desire to reach farther than what seems possible.



01.

5H3DX Tanzania

Chas, NK8O, will once again be active as 5H3DX from Tanzania from June 8 to July 2, 2026.

He will operate on the 30 to 10 meter bands using CW, PSK31, FT8, and possibly SSB.



01

Tanzania is a distinctive country in southeastern Africa with extensive protected areas. Its rich wildlife has made it an ideal safari destination; in its national parks, wild animals can be observed in their natural habitat. The five major African animals that tourists might be lucky enough to see are the lion, elephant, cheetah, rhinoceros, and buffalo.

But Tanzania is not only about safaris on the savannah. It is also home to the famous stratovolcano Mount Kilimanjaro, the largest freshwater bodies on the continent, and the island of Zanzibar with its long beaches, as well as the traditional lifestyle of local tribes. All of this gives the country a unique charm.

The indigenous peoples who inhabited the lands of Tanzania were the Bushmen and the Hottentots, later joined by the Cushitic and Bantu peoples. Zanzibar soon became a base for Arab, Persian, and Indian traders. It was during this period that the Swahili ethnic group was formed.



02.

FP/KV1J Miquelon Island

Eric, FP/KV1J, will once again be active from Miquelon Island, IOTA NA-032, from June 27 to July 14, 2026.

He will operate on the 80 to 6 meter bands using SSB, RTTY, CW, and FT8.

Latest DX Spots for FP/KV1J

QSL via his home callsign and LoTW.



02

As the last remnant of the former colonial empires of New France, Saint Pierre and Miquelon are part of the French overseas territories located in the northwest Atlantic, much closer to the Canadian region.

This area holds great historical and strategic importance, and its name is recognized with respect in different countries around the world. The islands are located at the entrance to the famous Fortune Bay, which stretches along the southern coast of Newfoundland, near the Grand Bank area.

These islands are located 3,819 km from Brest and, interestingly, are situated only 24 km from the Burin Peninsula.

03

Saint Martin was inhabited by the Arawaks (Amerindians) before the great discovery by Christopher Columbus and was known as the "Salt Island." This name was given to the territory because of the large deposits of this mineral.

After the discovery of the American continent in 1492, these lands were renamed Saint Martin and, on November 11 of that same year, were

placed on the world map.

A century and a half later, the first Dutch and French settlers established themselves on the island and, ever since, they have coexisted peacefully for more than 400 years. The treaty they signed in 1648 is one of the oldest treaties still in force today.

03.

FS/K9EL Saint Martin Island

John, FS/K9EL, will once again be active from Saint Martin Island, IOTA NA-105, from June 10 to 24, 2026.

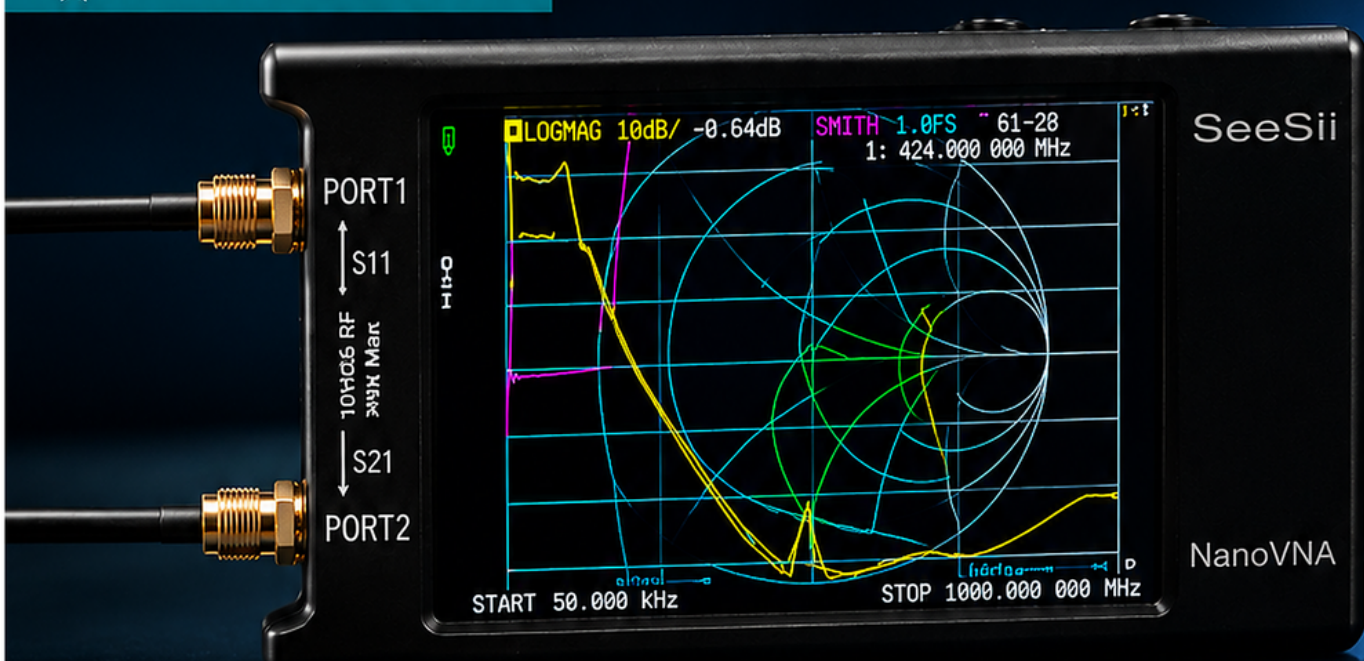
He will operate on the 80 to 6 meter bands.

Latest DX Spots for FS/K9EL

FS/K9EL Log Search

QSL via his home callsign, LoTW, and ClubLog OQRS.





WHEN A VNA CHANGES THE WAY YOU SEE YOUR ANTENNAS

— A conversation at the club meeting that turned into something bigger.

By [Juan Montijo, WP4OV](#)

It started like many conversations during our weekly Caribbean Amateur Radio Group meetings usually do—casually, with coffee, stories, opinions, and a table full of radios, cables, and ideas.

That night, however, the topic unexpectedly shifted toward something that immediately divided the room: VNAs.

One operator had recently purchased a small Nano VNA online for less than fifty dollars. Another questioned whether those inexpensive units could actually be trusted. Someone else insisted a traditional antenna analyzer was still the better option. A few operators admitted they owned a VNA but never truly learned how to use it. Others became curious the moment the colorful graphs appeared on the screen.

Within minutes, the room was filled with questions.

- What exactly does a VNA do?
- Is it only for engineers?
- Are the cheap ones accurate?
- Do amateur radio operators really need one?

And perhaps the most honest question of all:

Why do they look so intimidating?

“

An SWR meter tells you whether the patient has a fever.

A VNA gives you the X-ray.”

”



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Visualize what's really happening.



FIND PROBLEMS FASTER

Identify issues you can't see with an SWR meter.



UNDERSTAND RESONANCE

Discover where your antenna truly performs best.



TUNE WITH CONFIDENCE

Make adjustments with data, not guesswork.



LEARN, EXPLORE, IMPROVE

The more you understand, the better you operate.



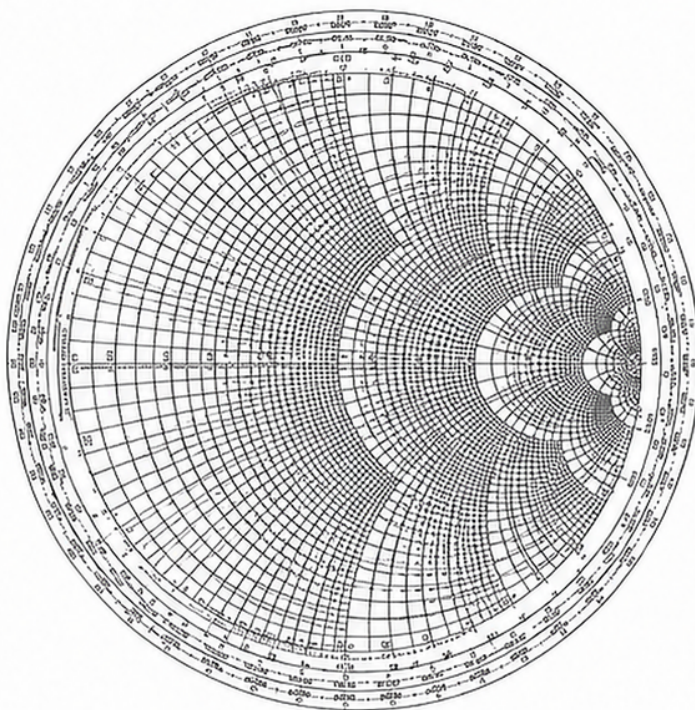
THE INTIMIDATING CIRCLE

Then someone pointed at one of the strange circular graphics on the screen and asked:

“And what in the world is THAT supposed to be?”

The room laughed.

It was the famous Smith Chart.



The Smith Chart: powerful, yet misunderstood at first glance.



At first glance, it can look intimidating—almost like something from a NASA control room.

But the truth is, many operators learn to use a VNA successfully without becoming experts on the Smith Chart itself.

Amateur radio operators don't need to become RF engineers to benefit from a VNA. In fact, most hams only need to understand a few practical ideas to begin learning from one:



RESONANCE



SWR CURVES



BANDWIDTH



FEEDLINE BEHAVIOR



PROPER CALIBRATION

“

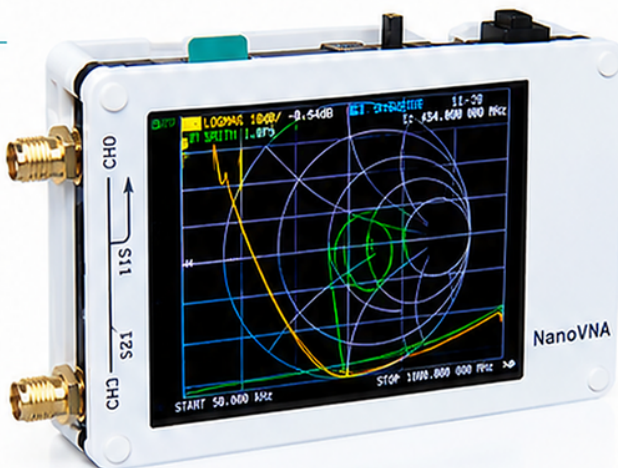
Understanding these concepts opens the door to a whole new level of insight into antennas, feedlines, and RF systems.

SMALL TOOL, BIG POSSIBILITIES

Over the last decade, inexpensive Nano VNAs from China suddenly appeared everywhere online. Almost overnight, a technology that once cost thousands of dollars became accessible to nearly any curious radio amateur willing to experiment.

For antenna tuning, portable operation, experimentation, troubleshooting coax problems, comparing antennas, and learning RF behavior visually, many Nano VNAs perform surprisingly well for the price.

They have opened doors that were financially closed to amateur radio operators for decades.



**Big performance.
Tiny footprint.
Huge potential.**

The Nano VNA has become the gateway for a new generation of operators to see what's really happening in their antennas.



CALIBRATION MATTERS

Even professional VNAs can produce misleading information if calibration is ignored or performed incorrectly. Fortunately, modern Nano VNAs have made this process far easier than many operators expect.

**Good calibration =
trustworthy data.
Always.**



REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS, REAL RESULTS

A \$50 Nano VNA should never be expected to perform like a professional instrument costing several thousand dollars—and that's perfectly okay.

Professional VNAs are designed for commercial, aerospace, military, and laboratory environments where measurement confidence is critical.



Most amateur radio operators will probably never use even a small percentage of what a professional laboratory-grade VNA can actually do.

LOWER-COST UNITS MAY HAVE:

- Smaller displays
- Reduced accuracy
- Less shielding from interference
- Inconsistent firmware
- Variable construction quality depending on manufacturer

THE REAL VALUE? UNDERSTANDING.

- ✓ The moment a mysterious antenna problem finally becomes **visible on the screen**.
- ✓ Discovering that the issue was never the antenna itself... but a damaged connector **hidden inside the feedline**.
- ✓ Watching resonance move while adjusting an antenna and finally **understanding** why it behaves differently.
- ✓ Comparing antennas, testing ideas, and **learning** faster than ever before.

“

For some hams, a traditional antenna analyzer will always remain the best choice—quick, practical, familiar, and easy to use.

For others, the VNA becomes something much more:

A window into finally seeing what has always been happening invisibly between the radio and the antenna.

”



THE BOTTOM LINE

A Nano VNA won't replace high-end instruments. But it will **change the way** amateur radio operators **understand, build, and improve** their antennas—forever.



KNOWLEDGE IS THE ULTIMATE UPGRADE.

And sometimes, the smallest tools open the biggest doors.



Operator or Algorithm?

Artificial intelligence in amateur radio contests and the ethical dilemma of the future of ham radio

By: SWR Editorial Team

Got it. I will avoid using dashes from now on.

Here is your corrected translation without them:

In recent times, the amateur radio community has begun to debate an issue that just a few years ago seemed like science fiction: the use of artificial intelligence (AI) to participate in radio contests. What was once exclusively an activity based on human skill, trained hearing, mental speed, propagation experience, and operating dexterity, now faces a new variable: systems capable of listening, responding, and executing contacts in an automated way.

This phenomenon has sparked a deep conversation within the hobby: to what extent does it remain amateur radio if the operator is no longer truly the one operating?



The origin of the debate: AI in contests

The topic began circulating in forums and communities when some amateur radio operators experimented with AI and automation systems capable of assisting in contests and even executing part of the real time information exchange process.

Although this is not an official event sanctioned by organizations such as the ARRL, there have been public and experimental tests where language models and voice recognition systems are integrated with software defined radio (SDR) stations.

These experiments have generated divided opinions:

- Some see them as a natural evolution of technology.
- Others consider them a break from the essence of ham radio.

The ethical concern: where does the operator end?

The core of the debate is not technical, but ethical.

Amateur radio has always been a space where personal skill has central value. A good operator does not only transmit; they listen, interpret propagation conditions, make quick decisions, and develop a “band intuition” that only comes with experience.

When an AI begins to perform those tasks, an uncomfortable question arises: Is it still a contest of human operators, or does it become a competition of algorithms?

Many amateur radio operators argue that allowing autonomous AI in contests could distort the original purpose: measuring human skill under real radio conditions. From this perspective, the risk is not the technology itself, but the loss of the human element that defines the hobby.

The other side of the discussion: technological evolution is inevitable

However, there is also a more open view within the community.

Amateur radio has always evolved with technology:

From CW to SSB

From analog to digital

From vacuum tube equipment to SDR

From manual listening to automatic modes such as FT8

Each generation has faced its own “technological purity debate,” and in every case, the hobby not only survived but expanded.

From this perspective, artificial intelligence is not a threat but another tool.

The key lies in how it is used.

AI as an assistant, not a replacement

A growing point of consensus is the distinction between:

✓ AI as a support tool

- Noise reduction in reception
- Assistance in decoding weak signals
- Propagation prediction
- Help with logging and organizing contacts
- Assistants that suggest station adjustments

✗ AI as a replacement for the operator

- Automatic contesting of QSOs without real human intervention
- Autonomous participation in contests
- Operational decision making without supervision

The line between both scenarios is precisely where the ethical discussion begins.

Many operators agree on a key idea: AI can improve the experience, but it should not replace the experience.

The risk of losing the essence of the hobby

Ham radio is not only communication; it is experimentation, learning, and human contact.

If AI were to completely replace interaction, the hobby could turn into a software competition rather than a radio one.

The true value of “radio to radio” contact could be diluted if behind every signal there is no longer a person listening and responding, but instead an automated system.

In that scenario, the risk is not technical... it is cultural.

But there is also an opportunity

Denying AI will not stop its progress. Rather than seeing it as a threat, many propose integrating it responsibly:

- Keeping a human operator always responsible for the station
- Using AI as a tool for improvement, not replacement
- Defining clear contest rules regarding automation
- Creating categories where AI can be part of the game without directly competing with humans

Even new contest formats could emerge:

- AI assisted contests
- Fully human contests
- Experimental automation contests

This would allow innovation without losing identity.

The necessary balance

Amateur radio has always lived in the balance between tradition and technology. CW, which was once the absolute foundation of the hobby, now coexists with advanced digital modes and automated systems. However, CW remains alive because the community chose to preserve it as a human skill. The same principle could be applied to artificial intelligence. It is not about rejecting the future, but about defining which parts of the hobby we want to keep genuinely human.

Conclusion: the true “operator” remains the key

The arrival of artificial intelligence in the ham radio world is not an anomaly, but a sign that the hobby continues to evolve.

However, it is also an important reminder:

Amateur radio is not only about transmitting signals... it is about the presence of an operator behind each transmission.

Technology can change, become automated, or even invisible. But if the human being disappears completely from the process, then what remains is no longer amateur radio in its deepest sense.

The future will likely not be a choice between AI or humans, but between responsible use or total replacement.

And that is where the community will have to draw its own line:

not to stop technological progress, but to ensure that the human voice never stops being the heart of ham radio.



Can You See Me Now?

Portable Operation from a Webcam

Currently there are thousands of webcams operating around the world, and they represent excellent locations for portable operations. Stations that manage to contact you can see you on their computers while you are talking with them.

When I operate from a site with a webcam, I post the camera link on my QRZ.com page. In this way, stations that contact me can go to QRZ, look up WORW, click the link, and see me in real time. I usually place a large sign visible on the camera with my callsign and operating frequency. Even DX colleagues who are not able to hear me can see me while I operate.

Many webcams today offer live streaming, which provides fast updates and nearly real time video. Other cameras, limited by bandwidth, update more slowly and may show only one image per minute.

I was at the Teller 1 Web Cam on June 8, 2022 (see attached photos) and made 10 contacts in CW and 10 contacts in SSB. This camera offers near real time video, although with an approximate 10 second delay. The site is located at 10,000 feet in altitude.



The high definition panoramic camera at Pikes Peak, which I frequently use (at 14,115 feet elevation), updates on a rotating basis every minute. It can be viewed at Pikes Peak Cameras. In the image, I am standing right above the sign with the letters "RW".



The remote Independence Pass (also known as Indy Pass) is located in central Colorado, at an elevation of 12,095 feet (3,687 meters) on the Continental Divide. Due to severe storms, this road remains closed during the winter. The webcam is wireless, powered by solar energy, and updates once per minute. In the photograph, I am standing just to the left of the tree. The camera is currently out of service but resumes operation during the summer.

Paul, WORW
Colorado



VHF/UHF Dual Band Digital Transceivers

ID-5200A
ID-5200E

ICOM

Icom ID-5200A

Icom's new flagship mobile is now a reality

NEW

VHF/UHF Dual Band Digital Transceivers

ID-5200A
ID-5200E

The successor to the ID- 5100A is here.

For years, amateur radio operators have been waiting for the successor to the legendary Icom ID-5100A, a radio that marked a turning point in the world of VHF/UHF mobile transceivers. In the previous edition of SWR Magazine, we presented a preview of the then mysterious ID-5200A, which was nothing more than a prototype exhibited by Icom. Today, that concept has become a reality.

At Dayton Hamvention 2026, Icom Inc. officially introduced the new Icom ID-5200A, a dual band mobile transceiver that redefines what we can expect from a modern VHF/UHF rig.

The announcement generated great excitement among attendees, who were able to see the radio in operation and confirm that Icom did not simply update the ID-5100, but instead designed a completely new platform, built for the present and future of amateur radio.

A worthy successor to the ID-5100

The ID-5200A arrives approximately twelve years after the launch of the ID-5100A. Although it retains the intuitive operating philosophy and the focus on D-STAR, it introduces features that until now were only found in high end HF equipment.



The new generation of Icom VHF/UHF mobile radios



Among its main innovations are:

- 4.3 inch color touchscreen display
- Real time waterfall display
- True dual reception
- Built in Wi Fi and Bluetooth
- Terminal Mode and Access Point Mode via internet
- Future compatibility with APRS
- Airband reception

Mounting options for vehicle, desktop, and docking station

In short, the ID-5200A represents a significant generational leap.

Modern design and intuitive operation

One of the most impressive aspects of the ID-5200A is its large high resolution touchscreen display. The visualization is clear, bright, and easy to read even under strong light conditions.

The front panel includes independent physical controls for each band:

- Two main knobs
- Two volume controls
- Two squelch controls
- Dedicated buttons for frequently used functions

This combination of touchscreen and physical controls offers the best of both worlds: flexibility and fast operation.

The first Icom mobile radio with a waterfall display

The major innovation of the ID-5200A is the inclusion of a waterfall display, making it the first Icom mobile radio to offer this feature.

The waterfall allows you to:

- Visualize signal activity in real time
- Detect weak stations
- Quickly identify occupied frequencies
- Evaluate propagation conditions

For those accustomed to radios like the Icom IC-7300, this feature will feel familiar and extremely useful.

True dual reception

The ID-5200A supports true simultaneous reception on both bands with multiple combinations:

- FM/FM
- FM/DV
- DV/DV
- V/V
- U/U
- V/U



This means the operator can, for example:

- Monitor two D-STAR repeaters at the same time
- Listen to a local conversation while following a digital net
- Monitor VHF and UHF simultaneously
- Listen to airband and amateur repeaters

It is a feature of great value for emergencies, nets, and mobile operation.

D-STAR more powerful than ever

Icom continues to strongly support D-STAR, and the ID-5200A takes this technology to a new level.

- Terminal Mode
- Access Point Mode
- DV Repeater Monitor
- Image transmission and reception

Thanks to built in Wi Fi, these functions can be used conveniently through an internet connection, without complicated setup.

Wi Fi and Bluetooth integration

Connectivity is one of the strengths of the new radio.

Built in Wi Fi

It allows:

- Connection to home networks
- Use of Terminal Mode and Access Point Mode
- Integration with PC and smartphones



Built in Bluetooth

It enables:

Use of wireless headsets

Connection with mobile devices

Greater convenience in the vehicle

These features fully modernize the operating experience.

APRS will arrive via firmware update

One of the best pieces of news is that Icom has confirmed APRS support through a future firmware update. This will allow:

- Automatic position reporting
- APRS messaging

- Telemetry
- Map tracking

With this addition, the ID-5200A will become one of the most complete mobile radios on the market.

Airband included

The radio also offers airband reception, adding extra appeal for aviation enthusiasts and those interested in aircraft monitoring.

Flexible installation options

Icom has designed multiple accessories to adapt to different operating styles:

- Car mounting brackets
- Docking brackets
- Desktop stands

This allows the unit to be used as:

- Mobile radio
- Compact base station
- Emergency communications hub

Availability

Icom has announced that the ID-5200A will be available during the summer of 2026. At the time of the announcement, no official price had been confirmed for the U.S. market, although expectations are that it will be positioned in the premium segment of digital mobile radios.

ICOM ID-5200A VHF/UHF DUAL BAND TRANSCEIVER



SPECIFICATIONS

FEATURE	DETAIL
 FREQUENCY RANGE	144–146 MHz (VHF Band) 430–440 MHz (UHF Band)
 OPERATING MODES	FM (Analog) and D-STAR (Digital Voice)
 DISPLAY	4.3-inch Color TFT Touchscreen High resolution, intuitive user interface
 WATERFALL DISPLAY	Yes, Real-time Waterfall Display (Icom's first mobile radio with this feature)
 DUAL RECEIVE	Real simultaneous reception on both bands Combinations: FM/FM, FM/DV, DV/DV, V/V, U/U, V/U
 D-STAR FEATURES	Terminal Mode / Access Point Mode DV Repeater Monitor, Image TX/RX
 WI-FI	Built-in Wi-Fi for D-STAR functions, Terminal Mode, Access Point Mode, and remote control
 BLUETOOTH	Built-in Bluetooth for wireless headset and compatible mobile devices

FEATURE	DETAIL
 APRS	APRS® function support (via future firmware update)
 AIRBAND RECEIVER	Receives Airband frequencies (108–137 MHz)
 MOUNTING OPTIONS	Vehicle mounting, Desktop stand, and Docking station (optional accessories)
 AUDIO OUTPUT POWER	50 W (VHF), 45 W (UHF) (at 13.8 V DC)
 SUPPLY VOLTAGE	13.8 V DC ±15%
 ANTENNA IMPEDANCE	50 Ω (SO-239)
 DIMENSIONS (HEAD UNIT)	approx. 140 (W) × 74 (H) × 24 (D) mm (5.51 × 2.91 × 0.94 in)
 WEIGHT (HEAD UNIT)	approx. 410 g (14.5 oz)
 OPERATING TEMPERATURE	–10 °C to +60 °C (+14 °F to +140 °F)
 OTHER FEATURES	Memory channels, Scan, GPS (via external GPS unit), MicroSD card slot, USB port, CI-V control, and more

* Specifications are subject to change without notice or obligation. * The Bluetooth® word mark and logos are registered trademarks owned by Bluetooth SIG, Inc.
* D-STAR is a digital protocol developed by JARL.

Our opinion

The Icom ID-5200A is not simply a replacement for the ID-5100A; it is a complete reinvention of the VHF/UHF mobile radio concept.

It combines:

- Modern technology
- Excellent ergonomics

- Powerful connectivity
- Advanced digital integration
- Great potential for expansion

For the operator seeking the best in FM, D-STAR, APRS, and wireless connectivity, this radio is set to become a must-have reference.

By: VE7LCG, Daniel Romila

External display for transceivers

»»» Disclaimer: I do not sell anything, I am not affiliated with any seller, and I do not promote products. I only provide examples of prices and places to buy so you can get a general idea of costs.

Many amateur radio operators have acquired transceivers that allow connection to an external display. It is very tempting to have an expanded SDR spectrum on a 22 inch monitor or even larger. We buy (or in my case, we receive as a gift) a modern transceiver precisely so we can view the SDR waterfall as clearly and as large as possible, isn't that right? So...

Problem: To view a large SDR waterfall, an additional monitor is required. In many cases, this monitor takes up more space than the transceiver itself.

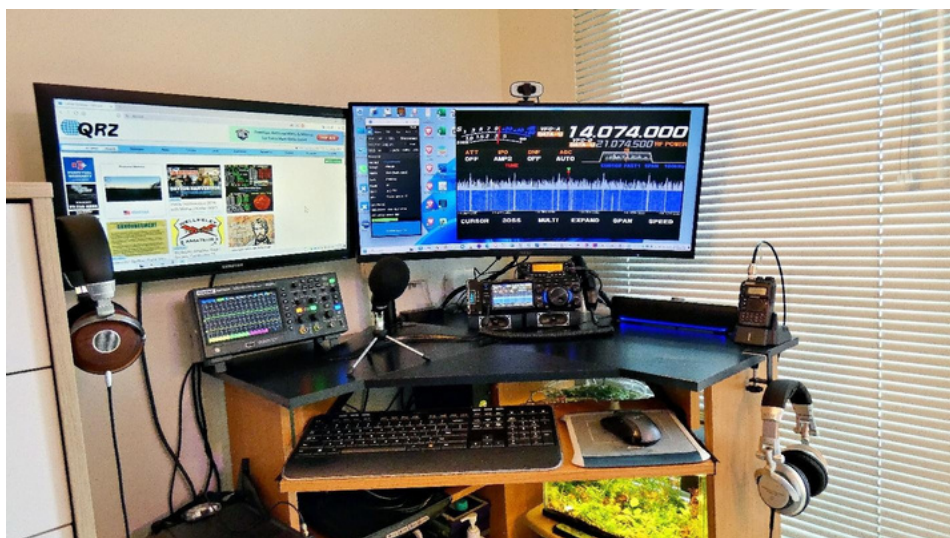
Solution: Use an existing monitor connected to the computer, not to the transceiver. Many of us already have the transceiver on a desk where there is a laptop or a

desktop computer, since we use it for FT8 and other digital modes, which require a computer and at least one monitor anyway. In my case, my corner desk.

Practical implementation of the solution: Instead of connecting an external monitor to the transceiver, the video output from the transceiver is connected to a

video capture card (a USB adapter), and that USB adapter is then connected to the computer's USB port. I bought a small USB dongle on temu.ca. At the time of writing this article (April 25, 2026), it costs 11.45 CAD (= 8.37 USD = 138.5 ZAR) plus taxes, and shipping is free with Canada Post in Canada.

[Link to purchase here.](#)



It takes between 6 and 10 days to arrive. This specific model is described as compatible with 1080p and only requires USB 2.0 for full video bandwidth. If audio were carried through HDMI, it would also be transferred to the computer digitally, of course. The one I received is labeled “4K,” and it does in fact work in 4K but with a reduced refresh rate of 30 Hz.

We do not need 4K (yet), because the resolution of our transceivers normally does not reach that level.

Recapping what we need from a hardware perspective:

- A transceiver with a digital video output (HDMI, DVI-D, DisplayPort, or their mini versions).
- An HDMI cable.
- Optionally, an adapter between the HDMI required by the USB capture device and the video output of the transceiver. In my case, for the YAESU FT-710, I needed a DVI-D to HDMI adapter.

As of April 25, 2026,

that adapter costs 2.02 CAD (= 1.5 USD = 24.5 ZAR) plus taxes, with free shipping:

[Link to purchase here.](#)

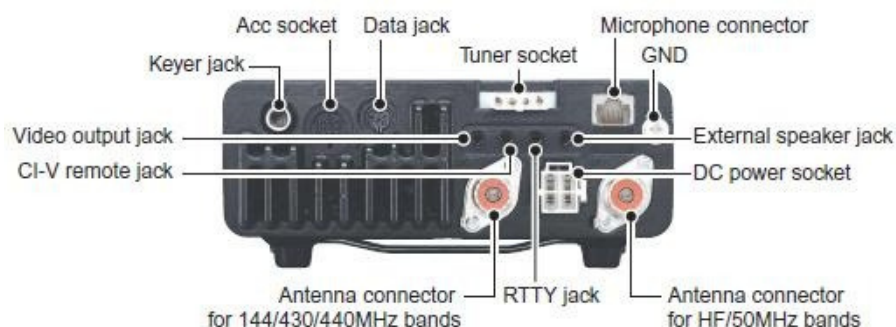


Some observations:

Older transceivers, such as the ICOM 7000, have video output, but it is an analog signal through an RCA-type connector:



To connect a transceiver like this to a computer, a different type of video capture device is required, such as the following:



An analog adapter of this type (of which only the yellow connector is used) costs approximately 6.28 CAD (= 4.6 USD = 76 ZAR) plus taxes, with free shipping (as of April 25, 2026, same source temu.ca).

But let us return to modern transceivers, such as the YAESU FT-710 (left) and the ICOM IC-7300 (right):

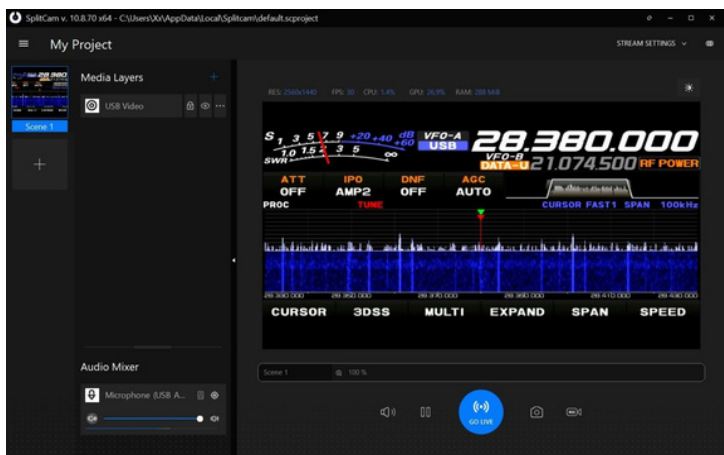


Once all the hardware is connected, the transceiver is linked to the computer and ready to display its screen on the computer monitor. My YAESU FT-710 only recognizes two resolutions for the external display: 800 × 480 and 800 × 600 pixels. The default resolution is the lower one, so I went into the settings and increased it. The only additional thing we need is software that allows us to capture the video from the transceiver’s display.



I use the free program SplitCam, which can be downloaded at:

To give you an idea, here is the settings window of this free software:



We do not need to see the entire complex window. It is enough to focus on what is called the “projector,” which is simply a replica of the transceiver’s screen. Please take another look at the desk image at the beginning of the article. I have tried other video capture or webcam software, and they all work. Since it is a window within Windows (and not an additional physical monitor), we can move it, resize it, and adjust it as needed. This solution does not require any extra space on an already crowded desk.

I use the “external display” all the time when operating SSB, because in many DX situations I first see the station as a modulated line on the screen and do not hear anything intelligible. However, I often manage to work it because my transceiver is SDR. I stop on the modulated line and often succeed in getting a usable SSB signal by adjusting the DSP and the notch filter on the radio.

Seeing the waterfall on a 34-inch curved monitor is a completely different experience compared to using the small display of the transceiver. And yes, many colleagues, after seeing the photo of my desk, have told me that I cannot be a “real radio amateur” because I am not a hoarder.



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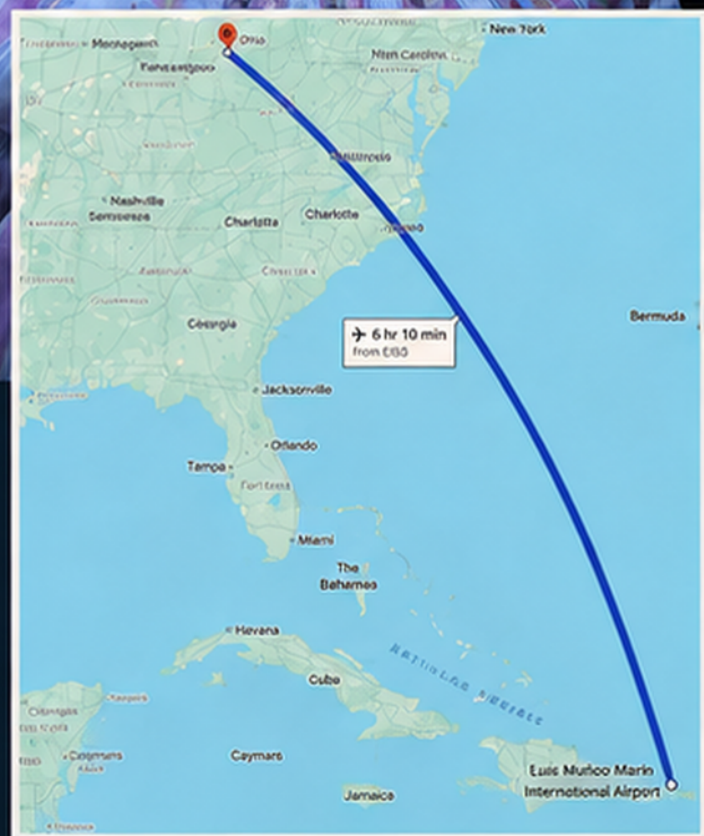


DAYTON HAMVENTION® 2026

Where amateur radio meets face to face again.

- Awards Banquet
- Flea Market
- New Equipment

On board to Ohio —
the SWR team begins
the trip to Hamvention®
2026.



*San Juan to Ohio —
a route connecting
the Caribbean to one of
amateur radio's most
important annual
gatherings.*

2026 Snapshot

37,924
attendees

43+
countries represented

*Before the fairgrounds opened their full rhythm, the journey itself
had already become part of the story.*

DAYTON EXPERIENCE

The Journey to Dayton

From Puerto Rico to Ohio, *SWR Magazine* followed the signal toward Hamvention® 2026.

From Puerto Rico to Ohio, the journey to Hamvention® began long before reaching the fairgrounds. It began in transit — with cameras, credentials, anticipation, and the sense that *SWR Magazine* was heading toward a story larger than a single event. Dayton appeared on the horizon not only as a destination, but as a name loaded with memory for generations of amateur radio operators. By the time the road reached Xenia, the trip had already become part of the story.

Dayton on the horizon — a familiar name across generations of amateur radio operators.



Xenia, Ohio — home of Hamvention® at the Greene County Fairgrounds.



Yanira and Juan Montijo with Michael Kalter, W8CI, during the Hamvention® 2026 Awards Banquet.

AWARDS BANQUET

Inside Hamvention's Awards Banquet

SWR Magazine entered one of Hamvention® 2026's most prestigious gatherings — an evening dedicated to recognition, service and community.

For *SWR Magazine*, Hamvention® 2026 began not only on the exhibit floor, but inside one of the event's most meaningful gatherings: the Awards Banquet. Invited by Michael Kalter, W8CI, Juan and Yanira Montijo represented SWR in an evening where recognition, service and friendship shared the same room. It was a setting where official honors met personal stories — and where SWR's presence reflected a growing editorial connection with the international amateur radio community.



The 2026 Awards Dinner at the DoubleTree by Hilton Dayton in Fairborn.



Michael Kalter, W8CI, and Jack Gerbs, WB8SCT, during the evening's formal program.

Honoring Excellence, Legacy and Community

The 2026 Hamvention® Awards celebrated achievement, service, mentorship and the human spirit behind amateur radio.



Michael D. Kalter, W8CI, adds a memorable musical moment to Hamvention®'s formal night of recognition — blending ceremony, friendship and tradition.

The Awards Banquet was more than a formal dinner. It was Hamvention®'s moment of recognition — a place where achievement, service and legacy were brought into focus before the amateur radio community. The 2026 honorees represented different paths within the hobby, from technical leadership and public service to mentoring, education and club excellence.

Hamvention® is not only where technology is revealed. It is where amateur radio honors the people who keep the hobby alive.



Robert B. "Bob" Famiglio, K3RF, Technical Achievement Award.



Dr. Jose "Otis" Vicens, NP4G, Amateur of the Year.

2026 Hamvention® Award Recipients

TECHNICAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Robert B. "Bob" Famiglio, K3RF

AMATEUR OF THE YEAR

Dr. Jose "Otis" Vicens, NP4G

SPECIAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Martha Fell, N3QBE, and Joe Fell, W3GMS

CLUB OF THE YEAR

Long Island CW Club



Martha Fell, N3QBE, and Joe Fell, W3GMS, Special Achievement Award.



Long Island CW Club, Club of the Year, represented by Howard Bernstein, WB2UZE.



HAMVENTION® 2026

Inside the Exhibit Hall

Inside the technological pulse of Hamvention® 2026, the exhibit hall revealed the event at full scale — where brands, operators, ideas and discovery moved together in real time.

From flagship brands to hands-on operating stations, the exhibit hall delivered innovation at every turn.

This was the living heart of Hamvention® 2026. Inside the exhibit hall, the energy of amateur radio became fully visible: major manufacturers, active demonstrations, crowded aisles and constant conversation. From flagship booths to hands-on operating positions, visitors explored new equipment, compared ideas and experienced the hobby as a global community in motion.

For SWR Magazine, the exhibit floor was more than a marketplace. It was a documentary portrait of innovation, curiosity and human connection — the place where technology came alive face to face.



Hands-on with Icom: visitors explored the latest equipment up close.



Yaesu's presence drew steady crowds and active engagement throughout the day.



Operating and experimenting: equipment in action across the exhibit floor.



Movement, discovery and conversation at the Kenwood booth.



Innovative antenna solutions on display across the hall.



Mobile stations and field antennas bring Hamvention's outdoor culture to life.

Field setups reveal the practical experimentation that has always defined amateur radio.

HAMVENTION® 2026

Outdoor Operations & Hamvention Culture

Beyond the exhibit halls, Hamvention® becomes a living field laboratory — antennas, trailers, operators and conversations under the open sky.

Beyond the exhibit halls, Hamvention® changes texture. The polished displays give way to antennas rising from vans, trailers converted into operating stations, emergency communications vehicles, flea market tables and operators comparing ideas under the open sky. Here, amateur radio feels less like a product showcase and more like a living field culture — practical, improvised, curious and deeply human. For SWR Magazine, the outdoor areas revealed another side of the event: a place where tradition, experimentation and service still share the same frequency.



Outside the halls, the fairgrounds become a moving village of operators, visitors and stories.



Communications vehicles highlight amateur radio's service-oriented role beyond the show floor.



The flea market remains a ritual of discovery — parts, radios and memories under the tents.



HAMVENTION® 2024

The Soul of the Flea Market

Across tables of tubes, radios, parts and stories, Hamvention® reveals one of the most human traditions: the search for memory, usefulness and connection.

At Hamvention®, the flea market is more than a place to buy and sell. It is a living archive of amateur radio—tubes, radios, parts, manuals, meters and memories spread across tables under the open sky.

Every box invites a question. Every old rig suggests a story. Around the tables, operators compare experiences, remember stations from the past, laugh at familiar problems and sometimes discover exactly the part they did not know they needed.

For *SWR Magazine*, this is where Hamvention® becomes deeply human: not only technology, but memory, curiosity and community carried from one generation of operators to the next.

1) Tables of parts, tubes and radios form a living archive of amateur radio memory.



2) Around the tables, the best discoveries are often conversations.



3) The outdoor market is one of Hamvention's enduring cultural traditions.



4) Every old rig, meter and component carries a story of past repair and discovery.





HUMAN CONNECTIONS

28 Years Around the Table — Hamvention® 2026

For nearly three decades, this annual gathering has carried the quiet spirit of amateur radio beyond the convention floor. Around one table, friends, engineers, operators and leaders reconnect through stories, laughter and shared memory.

It is not a formal program or a staged event. It is the kind of tradition that gives Hamvention® its human center — a reminder that behind every signal, callsign and technical achievement, there is a community built through friendship.



Jim Breakall, WA3FET, Angel Vázquez, WP3R, and Juan Montijo of SWR Magazine during the 28 Years Around the Table gathering at Hamvention® 2026.



Jim Breakall, WA3FET, Alan — AG4WK, Radio Club of America Director, and Amy Beckham, RCA Administrative Director, during the annual gathering in Dayton.

“At this table, titles disappear. A Nobel Prize winner, a DXer, an engineer and a newly licensed operator are united by the same signal.”

— SWR Magazine



Final Signal

Dayton fades into the distance, but the feeling remains. Hamvention® 2026 was more than a destination—it was a gathering of voices, stories and friendships carried across bands, tables and hallways. We arrived to cover an event and left reminded of something deeper: amateur radio endures because people keep its signal alive. Long after the booths are packed and the roads turn homeward, the memory of this community continues to travel with us. The trip ends, but the signal remains.

Dayton, Ohio — where the signal finds its people.

The Portable Hustler

A Simple QRP Antenna and an Unforgettable Experience from Aruba

By: Mike Zane N6ZW

Article prepared for SWR Magazine based on original notes, diagrams, and material provided by the author.

There is something special about portable operations.

I am not referring to the kind of activity that requires elaborate towers, heavy equipment, or complex installations, but rather that simple and practical operation that allows a radio amateur to reach a new location, set up a station in a few minutes, and get on the air using the available space.





Made with ribbon type cable, they formed the heart of the system. The entire setup could be assembled quickly and adapted to balconies, railings, or temporary installations.

According to Mike's original notes, the antenna could be easily secured using clamps, plastic ties, wire, or even tape, depending on the situation. The goal was not elegance, but portability and functionality.

And it worked.

During his trip to Aruba, Mike operated using the callsign P40Z and quickly discovered that a QRP contest was taking place. While listening to the stronger stations calling CQ, he decided to reduce his power and participate using only five watts.

"The callsign P40Z definitely added a few dB to the signal."

— Mike Zane, N6ZW

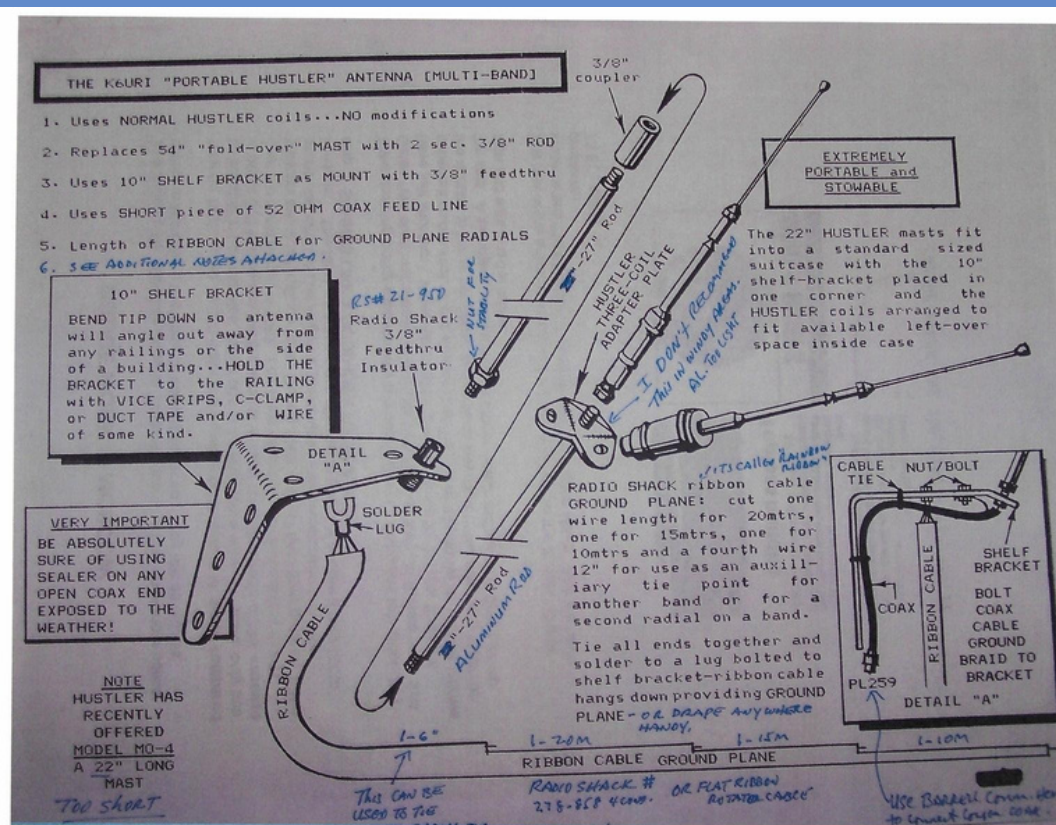
For Mike Zane, one of those moments occurred during a trip to Aruba in the early 1990s.

Mike brought with him a compact multiband portable antenna system based on standard Hustler coils and a lightweight mast setup designed specifically for travel. The idea was simple: to create an HF system that could fit into a standard suitcase while still delivering effective performance in real portable operations.

The result was what Mike called the "Portable Hustler."

What made this project particularly interesting was its simplicity. The antenna used standard Hustler components with no modifications to the coils. A short mast section, a compact mount, a small length of coaxial cable, and radials.

Operating from the balcony shown in the photographs, Mike used the portable system to make contacts from the island, enjoying the flexibility that only amateur radio can offer. The compact setup proved especially useful in temporary installations where space and transportation were important factors.



The original antenna diagram, reproduced from Mike's files, reflects the practical experimentation so familiar to many amateur radio operators. The handwritten notes, improvised modifications, and adjustments born from field experience tell the story of a system refined through real use rather than theory.

The system used standard Hustler resonators mounted on a portable mast, with ribbon cable radials acting as a ground plane. The design emphasized low weight, ease of transport, and quick deployment while still maintaining multiband capability.

One of the most ingenious aspects of the system was its ability to be efficiently stored inside a standard suitcase. Mike's notes mention how the Hustler coils were arranged

around the remaining space, while the mast sections and hardware occupied very little room.

For traveling amateur radio operators, especially in an era before modern ultralight HF equipment, solutions like this represented the creativity and ingenuity that have always characterized amateur radio.

Today, decades later, the photographs and diagrams continue to capture that same spirit: an operator adapting to the environment, experimenting with available materials, and finding a way to get on the air from virtually anywhere.

And perhaps that is exactly what makes the "Portable Hustler" more than just an antenna project.

It is a reminder that some of the best amateur radio experiences begin with little more than a suitcase, a few watts, and the willingness to try.



Main Features of the Antenna

- Uses standard Hustler coils.
- No modifications required on the coils.
- Designed for multiband operation.
- Compact enough to fit inside a suitcase.
- Radial system made with ribbon type cable.
- Ideal for balconies and temporary installations.
- Lightweight and designed for portable QRP operation.

One of the most ingenious aspects of the system was its ability to be efficiently stored inside a standard suitcase. Mike's notes

In addition to the main features already mentioned, the Portable Hustler offers a series of technical and practical advantages that make it an excellent option for the traveling amateur radio operator:

P40Z
K6URI

QSO WITH	CONFIRMING QSO				
	DATE	UTC	RST	MHz	MODE

☐ Pse ☐ QSL ☐ Tnx ☐

T. M. Zane
P.O. Box 455
Lodi, California 95241

Operational photographs from Aruba and the original QSL card for P40Z associated with Mike's portable operations.

About the Author

Mike Zane has been a licensed amateur radio operator since 1956. His interest in radio began with crystal receivers and later led him to serve in the U.S. Army Security Agency, specializing in Morse code interception and direction finding. After 25 years of service with the Lodi Police Department, Mike continued to pursue amateur radio along with his passion for writing.

**Amateur radio connects the world using
the energy of nature and the magic of
radio waves.**



By: David Beckler NOSAP



THE HOLY GRAIL OF AMATEUR RADIO COLLECTORS

COLLINS S2

Many amateur radio enthusiasts are familiar with the Collins S-Line (particularly the S1 and S3 series), but the “elusive Collins S2 Line” often goes unnoticed. As a history enthusiast, I have always enjoyed exploring the lesser known corners of radio history, and the Collins S2 Line is a fascinating example of a truly significant contribution. So what exactly is it, and why is it so rare?

Its origin dates back to the late 1950s, when the United States government needed a reliable radio covering 3 to 30 megahertz to support communications for American consulates and embassies, MARS stations, and likely also some “three letter” government agencies. At that time, Collins was already producing the S1 line. To fulfill the government contract, some...

S1 receivers that were already completed were refurbished and converted into S2 line equipment. In total, only 300 of these radios were produced. As is often the case with government equipment, when it becomes obsolete it is usually scrapped and destroyed, and rarely makes its way into civilian hands, which makes surviving units exceptionally rare pieces in the collectors' market.



Photo by: @jonglei

The Collins S2 line holds an important place in radio history. From a technical standpoint, it was the first transmitter and receiver system with a dual crystal bank design that covered the full range from 3 to 30 megacycles. Although some operators attribute this innovation to the Collins KWM-2A, that model did not appear until the early 1970s during the Vietnam War. Pilots used the KWM-2A to handle communications directly,

without the need for onboard radio operators. For ground operations, it was also much easier to transport in the field. The CP-1 crystal pack was originally developed for the S2 line and was later also used with the KWM-2A.

The Collins S2 line remains one of those items considered the "Holy Grail" for amateur radio collectors: rare, historically significant, and obscure enough to spark curiosity every time one appears. If you would like to explore this fascinating story in more depth, you can watch my full video presentation here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jZZVX_LDBYQ

David "SAP" Beckler, NØSAP



Photo by: @jonglei

Build, Experiment, and Innovate

The True Amateur Spirit

Hello everyone,

My article about Wayne Green generated more reactions than anything else I have published. I was a strong supporter of Wayne Green and I truly regretted the day he passed away. He was a revolutionary figure in amateur radio. While I did not agree with all of his views one hundred percent of the time, I agreed with him far more often than I disagreed.

Please excuse my writing these days. I have eye surgery coming up soon and right now I have to use a huge monitor and ridiculous glasses just to get online. A smartphone? No way. I would probably end up accidentally ordering a truckload of Baofengs, three rolls of coax, and a mysterious antenna tuner from China before breakfast.

But enough about me.

I started subscribing to 73 Magazine when I became a ham in 1977 and followed it through all its changes over the years. In my opinion, it featured some of the best construction articles ever published. These

were projects that the average amateur radio operator could actually build in a basement or garage, and most of the time they worked surprisingly well. Sometimes they even survived first power-up without releasing the famous “magic smoke,” which already put you ahead of half of today’s commercial equipment.



Back then, experimentation was the heart of amateur radio. Hams built things because they wanted to learn, improve, and occasionally blow a fuse while discovering why grounding actually matters. You learned by doing, not by watching seventeen YouTube videos and then arguing online about which imported handheld has the brightest flashlight.

Today, too many operators think experimenting means changing the background color on a waterfall display. So what would Wayne think if he were still with us today? For veteran hams reading this, you probably already know. For newer operators, you may not realize the powerful voice Wayne Green was within amateur radio. He constantly challenged the established system and kept the ARRL in check, at least to some extent. He believed amateur radio should be experimental, exciting, affordable, and open to ordinary people, not just engineers with deep pockets and a tower farm visible from low Earth orbit.

You can still read many of his old magazines on Archive.org. Go read a few issues. You will come out smarter, more entertained, and probably laughing at least once per page. You will also realize that many of the same problems Wayne complained about 40 years ago are still present today.

The main amateur radio organization in the United States still has a lot of work to do. It needs to serve the average ham better at a reasonable price. It needs to find a way to truly engage younger operators before the hobby slowly turns into a retirement club with antennas and coffee strong enough to strip paint.



Photo by: nutsvolts.com

Yes, FT8 has given amateur radio a temporary boost. Suddenly, people who have not spoken into a microphone since the Carter administration are racking up DX contacts from a garden chair while the computer does all the work. Some operators now consider a successful contact to be clicking a mouse while eating a sandwich and watching reruns of Matlock. Now, before the FT8 crowd grabs their keyboards and starts warming up angry emails, let me say this: digital modes are an impressive technology. Wayne would definitely appreciate them. But he would also ask a painful question:

“Why do so many hams buy radios instead of building something?”

And honestly, he would be right.

Wayne believed that amateur radio should produce experimenters, innovators, and technically curious people. He would probably look around today and wonder why more hams are not designing antennas, building kits, experimenting with SDR, playing with microwave systems, mesh networks, satellites, and digital communications.

Instead, much of the hobby has become people arguing online about band plans, monitoring repeaters like volunteer mall security guards, and debating whether a contact was “real radio.”

Meanwhile, a teenager can build a robot, launch a drone, write code, and control half their home electronics from a smartphone, and still never have heard of amateur radio. That should concern all of us.

Wayne would likely say that the future of amateur radio depends on experimentation, not nostalgia.

You cannot build the future of amateur radio by endlessly talking about how great things were in 1968 while protecting your Collins gear like it belongs in the Smithsonian. Wayne respected the past, but he always looked forward. He wanted hams to experiment, invent, test ideas, break things, fix them, and push communications technology forward.

That spirit is what built amateur radio in the first place.

I think Wayne would tell us to stop treating the hobby like a museum piece and start making it exciting again. Teach young people how to build antennas. Get them involved in SDR, satellites, Arduino projects, emergency communications, digital networks, and hands on experimentation. Let them see that radio is not just older men arguing about coax connectors over breakfast at Denny’s.

Because if amateur radio loses its experimental spirit, then all we are really left with is an expensive collection of blinking boxes and arguments over who has the best signal report.

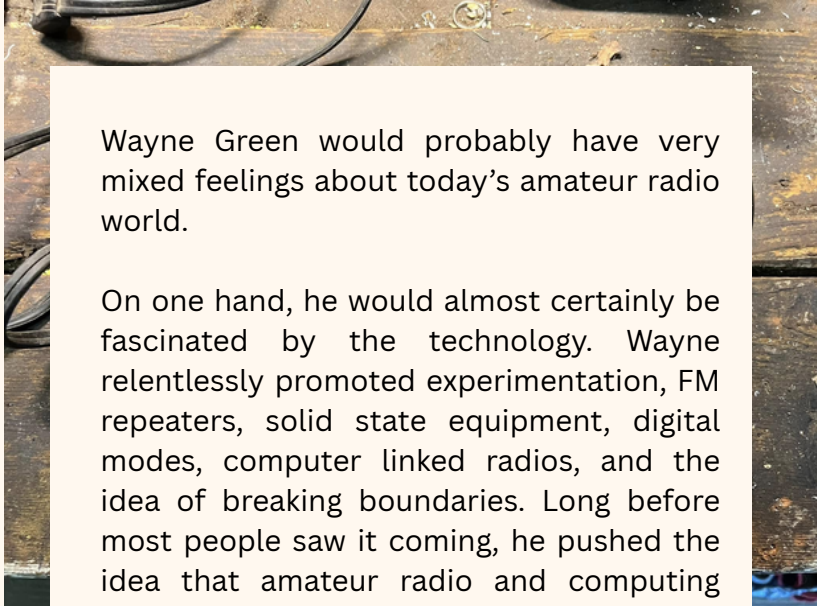
So, without further delay, here is my interpretation of what Wayne Green would say about today’s amateur radio world. And in many ways, my thoughts still align with his from all those years ago.

Photo by: aarauctions.com



Photo by: Sean Pruitt





Wayne Green would probably have very mixed feelings about today's amateur radio world.

On one hand, he would almost certainly be fascinated by the technology. Wayne relentlessly promoted experimentation, FM repeaters, solid state equipment, digital modes, computer linked radios, and the idea of breaking boundaries. Long before most people saw it coming, he pushed the idea that amateur radio and computing would eventually merge.

He would likely love things like:

- SDR radios
- FT8 and weak signal digital modes
- Amateur radio satellites and cubesats
- Mesh networks
- Portable emergency communications
- Affordable Chinese handheld radios that get more people on the air
- Makerspaces and integration with Arduino and Raspberry Pi
- Hams building microwave and high speed digital systems

Wayne believed that amateur radio operators should constantly experiment and stop treating the hobby like a museum piece guarded by self appointed curators who still think a Drake receiver and a spool of solder represent the peak of human civilization.

He would probably look at modern SDRs and say:

“Do you realize you now own equipment more powerful than 1960s government labs, and you are using it to argue about audio reports on 75 meters?”

At the same time, he would almost certainly criticize parts of the hobby very strongly. Probably all in CAPITAL LETTERS and with at least three exclamation marks.

Wayne spent decades attacking what he saw as excessive elitist control, stagnation, and “appliance operation.” He often criticized the ARRL and traditionalists who focused too much on rules, prestige, and preserving the past instead of fostering innovation and growth.

He would probably say things like:

“TOO MANY HAMS BUY BOXES INSTEAD OF BUILDING THINGS!!!”

“THE HOBBY STOPPED ATTRACTING ENOUGH YOUNG EXPERIMENTERS!!!”

“AMATEUR RADIO SHOULD BE IN SCHOOLS!!!”

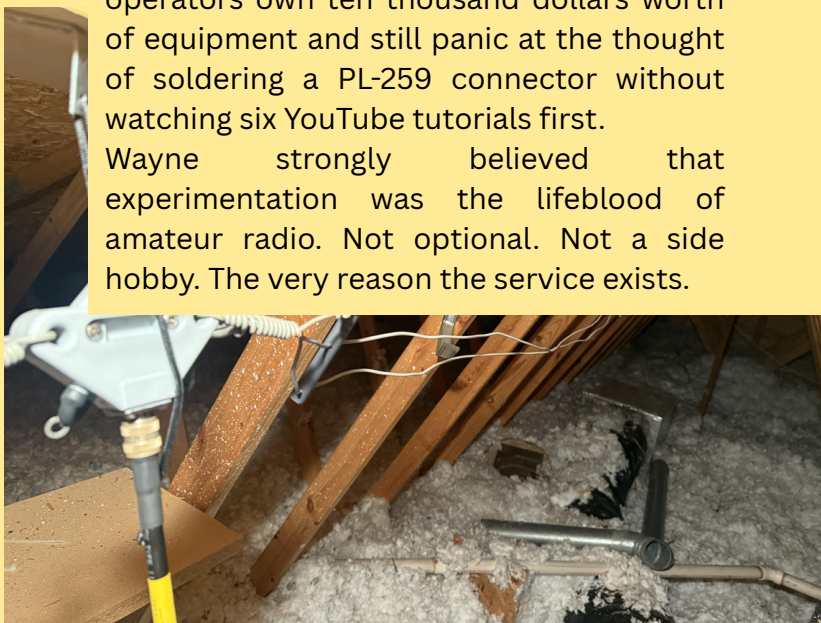
“WE SHOULD BE INVENTING THE FUTURE, NOT DEBATING OLD OPERATING HABITS!!!”

“STOP COMPLAINING ABOUT LICENSE STANDARDS AND START GETTING PEOPLE EXCITED ABOUT RADIO!!!”

And honestly, Wayne would probably enjoy watching today's online debates quite a bit. He would likely wonder how a hobby built around communication became so good at making people yell at each other over bandwidth, FT8, HOA antenna rules, and whether someone used the correct phonetics during a POTA activation.

He might even be surprised that some operators own ten thousand dollars worth of equipment and still panic at the thought of soldering a PL-259 connector without watching six YouTube tutorials first.

Wayne strongly believed that experimentation was the lifeblood of amateur radio. Not optional. Not a side hobby. The very reason the service exists.



That is the part many people forget.

Amateur radio was never designed to become a consumer electronics club where people gather to compare imported black boxes with more menus than a nuclear submarine. The hobby was meant to produce experimenters, inventors, technically curious minds, and people willing to try new ideas even if they occasionally fail spectacularly.

Especially if they fail spectacularly.

Wayne understood something important: experimenting involves risk. Sometimes your antenna design works beautifully. Sometimes it melts, oscillates, picks up interference from a nearby blender, or causes your neighbor's television to start receiving Finnish weather satellites.

That is called learning.

Today, too many amateur radio operators are afraid to make mistakes. They want every project prepackaged, every answer posted online, every configuration optimized by someone else, and every firmware update approved by seventeen reviewers before pressing "install."

Wayne would probably shout:

"JUST BUILD SOMETHING!!!"

He would likely ask why more clubs are not teaching young people how to build antennas, assemble kits, experiment with SDR, design digital networks, or bounce signals off satellites. Instead, too many clubs spend half their meetings discussing coffee prices and the other half talking about who was splattering on last week's net.

Meanwhile, a teenager can build a drone, write software, control a robot from a smartphone, and design circuits on a laptop, and still never have heard of amateur radio. That should terrify anyone who cares about the future of the hobby.

Wayne would probably love how accessible amateur radio has become. Cheap handheld radios may not be perfect, but they get people on the air. He would definitely support easier entry paths if that meant attracting more technically curious people.

But he would also expect new operators to grow beyond simply buying equipment. Owning a radio is not experimenting. Programming a repeater offset is not experimenting.

Spending six hours on Facebook arguing because someone said FT8 is not "real radio" is definitely not experimenting. Building, testing, modifying, learning, failing, improving, and pushing communications technology forward, that is experimenting.

Photo by: Sean Pruitt



Wayne believed that amateur radio could shape the future of communications technology. From the 1960s through the 1980s, amateur radio was deeply connected to careers in electronics, engineering, and computing. A teenager with a soldering iron and an amateur radio license could one day help design the next generation of communication systems.

Today, too many young people think “RF exposure” means standing too close to a Wi-Fi router while downloading TikTok videos. That disconnect is dangerous.

He would also likely point out that while FT8 has helped keep activity alive, a hobby cannot survive forever with people silently clicking macros at 2 a.m. while collecting countries like Pokémon cards. At some point, someone still has to build, invent, experiment, and inspire. Because without experimentation, amateur radio slowly stops being amateur radio.

It simply becomes another appliance hobby with antennas.

So his overall reaction today would probably sound something like this:

“THE TECHNOLOGY TODAY IS INCREDIBLE. THE TOOLS ARE BETTER THAN ANYTHING WE DREAMED OF IN 1975. BUT TOO MANY OPERATORS HAVE FORGOTTEN THE EXPERIMENTAL SPIRIT THAT MADE AMATEUR RADIO IMPORTANT IN THE FIRST PLACE. STOP ARGUING ABOUT THE PAST, STOP POLISHING YOUR COLLECTION OF GOLD-PLATED SCREWDRIVERS, TURN OFF THE TWENTY-SEVEN ONLINE DEBATES ABOUT COAX QUALITY, AND GO BUILD SOMETHING REVOLUTIONARY.”

This article was written by Alan J. Wilson NOXO. If you agree or disagree, I do not care. My email is: n0xo@protonmail.com



U-30 Association of Leonese Radio Amateurs

45th anniversary

The U-30 Association of Leonese Radio Amateurs proudly celebrates its 45th anniversary, establishing itself as a reference in the world of radio communications and technical association activity at the regional level and now on a global scale. For nearly five decades, the organization has promoted training, fellowship, and the development of amateur radio among professionals and enthusiasts in León.

45 YEARS CONNECTING THE RADIO COMMUNITY

To commemorate this milestone, the Association will launch the special event “45th ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL QSL.” For this purpose, the special callsign EH45RCU will be activated and will be on the air from June 15 to June 25, 2026, allowing operators from around the world to contact the commemorative station.

This activity seeks not only to celebrate the Association’s legacy, but also to promote radio exchanges and award programs. All amateur radio operators are invited to monitor the frequencies, confirm contacts, and obtain the highly sought-after QSL card for this anniversary.



For more details about operating frequencies, the exact activation period, and the history of the association, you can visit the official website:

[Official website EH45RCU](#)

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ea1rcu.u30@gmail.com

SWR ON THE AIR

From Our Readers

REAL OPERATORS. REAL STATIONS. REAL RADIO.

At SWR Magazine, we believe the heart of amateur radio lives in your shack, your antennas, and your experiences on the air.

We invite readers worldwide to share photos that capture the essence of ham radio in action.



WHAT WE'RE LOOKING FOR: _____



SHACKS



ANTENNAS



FIELD DAY



JOTA / JOTI



CLUB ACTIVITIES



POTA / SOTA / BOTA



MOBILE SETUPS



PORTABLE STATIONS

REAL OPERATING MOMENTS

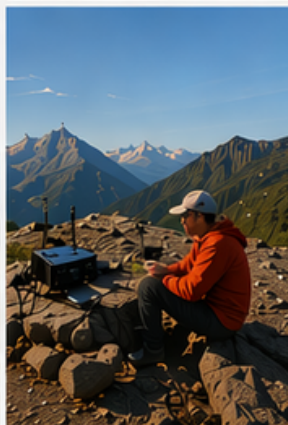


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ON THE AIR

AMATEUR RADIO CONTESTS THIS MONTH



ARRL INTERNATIONAL DIGITAL CONTEST

Dates: June 6, 2026, 18:00 UTC to June 7, 2026, 24:00 UTC

Modes: RTTY, PSK31, PSK63, FT4, FT8, and other authorized digital modes

Participants: Worldwide, open to all amateur radio operators

Exchange: RST report + state/province or serial number

Note: An excellent opportunity for digital mode enthusiasts with high international activity.



ALL ASIAN DX CONTEST

Dates: June 20, 2026, 00:00 UTC – June 21, 2026, 23:59 UTC

Modes: CW

Participants: Worldwide, with a focus on contacts with Asia

Exchange: RST report + operator age (or zone)

Note: An excellent opportunity to work Asian stations in telegraphy.



ARRL JUNE VHF CONTEST

Dates: June 13, 2026, 18:00 UTC to June 15, 2026, 02:59 UTC

Modes: CW, SSB, FM, and digital modes

Participants: Worldwide; stations outside the United States and Canada may work stations in those regions

Exchange: 4 character Maidenhead grid square (example: FK68)

Note: The most important contest of the year for the 6 meter and VHF/UHF bands.



ARRL FIELD DAY 2026

Dates: June 27, 2026, 18:00 UTC – June 28, 2026, 20:59 UTC

Modes: CW, SSB, FM, and digital modes

Participants: Primarily the United States and Canada, but open to stations worldwide

Exchange: Operating category + ARRL section (e.g., 2A PR)

Note: The most popular amateur radio event, combining contesting, emergency preparedness, and public demonstration.



KIDS DAY

Dates: June 20, 2026, 18:00–23:59 UTC

Modes: SSB

Participants: Worldwide, with emphasis on young operators and stations supporting them

Exchange: Name, age, location, and station information

Note: An ideal activity for introducing children and young people to amateur radio.



HIS MAJESTY THE KING OF SPAIN CONTEST

Dates: June 27, 2026, 12:00 UTC – June 28, 2026, 11:59 UTC

Modes: SSB

Participants: Worldwide

Exchange: RS report + serial number or Spanish province

Note: Very popular in Europe and excellent for working Spanish stations.

In every contest we are not just chasing points; we are looking for new voices, new countries, and the excitement of pushing our own limits.

Celebrate the 250th Anniversary of the United States On the Air

An iconic summer event returns with historical themes,
special event stations, and global participation.

By: Robert A Josuwelt WM3PEN



EN: WM3PEN – Assembly Room, Independence Hall, Philadelphia, PA. Historic site where the Continental Congress declared independence in 1776.



EN: WM3PEN special event – Activity combined with the World Soccer Tournament special event. Two QSL cards available from July 1 to July 7.

coordinator of the WM3PEN activity in Philadelphia, PA, indicates that his QSL card will feature the Assembly Room at Independence Hall.

In 1776, the Continental Congress declared independence in this room, and in 1787 the United States Constitution was debated and signed there. Most historians consider this hall to be one of the most historic in the country.

Other QSL cards will show the first location where the Declaration was read in each Colony.

“Most historians consider this hall to be one of the most historic places in the United States.”

Recognition and Special Certificates

In addition to individual QSL cards, a certificate will be available recognizing America 250 and the dedication and work of Ken, KU2US (SK), who created the 13 Colonies special event in 2009.



On the Air: July 1-7

Celebrate the 250th anniversary of the United States on the air by participating in the 18th annual 13 Colonies special event, taking place from July 1 through July 7.

The event will feature special event stations K2A–K2M representing each of the original 13 Colonies, as well as GB13COL representing England, TM13COL representing France, and WM3PEN representing Philadelphia, where independence began.

This year's theme will highlight the first reading of the Declaration of Independence in each of the 13 Colonies. Many QSL cards will feature imagery from this historic event.

Historic Places That Come to Life

Bob Josuweit, WA3PZO, Executive Director of the Thirteen Colonies Amateur Radio Association and



The certificate can be downloaded or requested. Complete information for requesting QSL cards or the certificate can be found on the 13 Colonies website: www.13Colonies.us.

Two Events, Double Opportunity

Josuweit notes that, in addition to the 13 Colonies event, WM3PEN will also participate in the World Soccer Tournament special event, which will take place from June 11 to July 19.

If a station makes contact with WM3PEN between July 1 and July 7, it will be eligible for two different QSL cards: one from the 13 Colonies event and another from the World Soccer Tournament event. Both cards can be viewed on the WM3PEN page on QRZ.com.

"It is very nice to exchange 'Happy Canada Day' on July 1 and receive Fourth of July greetings from around the world."



Photo by: swling.com

A Global Summer Tradition

The 13 Colonies special event has become one of the largest summer operating events, with more than 261,000 contacts made during the week.

Special event stations will be active on voice, CW, and digital modes.

Josuweit, who has been involved with the event since 2011, notes that it is very enjoyable to exchange "Happy Canada Day" on July 1 and receive Fourth of July greetings from around the world.

So this summer, go ahead and enjoy the air!

Nook of Nostalgia

El encanto de las radios de tubos al vacío

There was a time when the heart of every amateur radio station glowed with the warm orange light of vacuum tubes. Before microprocessors and digital displays, legendary equipment from companies such as Heathkit, Collins Radio Company, Drake, and Yaesu filled the radio room with warmth, the smell of electronic components, and an almost living presence.



Turning one of these rigs on was almost a sacred ritual. You flipped the main power switch and then came the patient wait while the tubes warmed up to operating temperature. The soft hum of the transformer, the gradual glow of the filaments, and the unmistakable smell of warm electronics filled the shack. It was as if the station itself was slowly coming to life, breathing before fully awakening.

Once it was ready, every adjustment demanded total focus. The operator carefully tuned the “plate,” “load,” and band settings, watching the meters with absolute concentration. There were no auto menus or digital protection circuits correcting mistakes; everything depended on the ham’s ear, experience, and instinct. A proper tune could mean a clean signal spanning the ocean; a mistake meant wasted energy or a badly matched rig. It was radio in its purest, most formative form.

On receive, the sound had its own character. Tube receivers delivered a warm audio quality, with a smoothness that is hard to describe in technical terms. Weak signals seemed to rise slowly out of the noise floor, as if the ether itself was gradually revealing distant conversations. Listening to a DX station under those conditions was a mix of patience, excitement, and discovery.

There was also the human side of the process. Many hams learned practical electronics hands-on through these rigs. Swapping out a tube, replacing a capacitor, or peaking and tuning a circuit wasn’t just routine maintenance it was part of the ongoing learning curve of the hobby itself.



Each shack was, in essence, a personal lab where you could see how science turned into communication. Over time, digital rigs arrived, lighter, more efficient, and more precise. Technology moved forward, but something in the overall experience changed along the way. Still, many hams today keep these classic rigs alive or restore them. Powering one up now is like stepping back into a time when radio had real physical weight, real heat, and a much more direct connection between the operator and the signal.

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PRODUCTS – INNOVATION – SERVICES – COMMUNITY



By: New England Sci-Tech

ARRL FIELD DAY 2026

Tradition, service,
and passion for
amateur radio.

By: Equipo editorial SWR

The American Radio Relay League, better known as the ARRL, organizes each year one of the most important and iconic events in worldwide amateur radio: ARRL Field Day. Much more than just a radio contest, this event represents a combination of technical experimentation, emergency preparedness, public education, and fellowship among hams. Field Day 2026 will take place on June 27 and 28, 2026, continuing a tradition that began more than nine decades ago.

From its beginnings in 1933, ARRL Field Day has steadily evolved, adapting to technological and social changes while keeping its core mission intact: proving that ham radio is still a vital communications resource, especially when everything else goes down.

In a world dominated by the internet, cellular networks, and complex digital systems, Field Day still reminds us that a knowledgeable ham, some creativity, and a simple radio setup can still get the job done under almost any conditions.

The Birth of Field Day

The first Field Day took place in June 1933. Back then, ham radio was growing fast and operators were looking for ways to prove they could get on the air outside of permanent home or building stations. The idea was simple but innovative: take the gear into the field, operate under improvised conditions, and demonstrate that hams could still communicate under challenging circumstances.

The 1930s were a key period for wireless communications. Many commercial systems were still limited, and ham radio was one of the few spaces where individuals could freely experiment with antennas, transmitters, and propagation techniques.

Field Day was born precisely as a hands-on lab where hams could put their technical skills to the test.

Over time, the event started drawing more and more participants. Radio clubs, individual operators, and community groups began gathering in parks, mountains, beaches, and rural areas to set up temporary ham radio stations. The idea of operating “in the field” also had a strategic angle: if a natural disaster or national emergency occurred, hams needed to be able to get communications up and running without relying on conventional infrastructure.

The evolution of the event through the years

As technology advanced, so did Field Day. During the 1940s and 1950s, the event began to incorporate more sophisticated gear and more organized operating techniques. In the middle of World War II and later during the Cold War, the ability to set up independent communications became even more critical.

In the 1960s and 1970s, the growth of ham radio in the United States and Canada turned Field Day into a full-blown annual celebration. Thousands of hams started taking part on a regular basis, and clubs used the event as an opportunity to educate the public about the importance of emergency communications. With the arrival of the digital era, Field Day evolved once again. It was no longer just about voice or Morse code. Digital modes began to play a bigger role, allowing more efficient contacts and experimentation with new technologies. Today, the event includes everything from traditional HF voice and CW to satellite contacts, advanced digital modes, and stations running entirely on solar power or batteries.

One of the most interesting aspects of Field Day’s evolution has been the integration of new generations of hams. Many modern setups include “Get On The Air” (GOTA) stations, specifically designed so beginners and young operators can



Photo by: Denver Radio Club



Photo by: esterolifemagazine.com

make their first radio contacts under the supervision of experienced operators.

This has turned the event into an important educational and recruitment tool for ham radio.

More than a contest

Although many people associate Field Day with competing to make the highest number of contacts, the ARRL emphasizes that it should not be viewed solely as a contest. The true purpose of the event is to practice emergency communications and demonstrate the technical capability of ham radio.

During Field Day, stations are required to operate under conditions similar to what might be encountered in a real emergency. Many run on generators, solar panels, batteries, or other alternative power sources. It is also common to deploy improvised antennas, portable towers, and fully temporary stations.

This approach has major real world importance. Hurricanes, earthquakes, wildfires, and other natural disasters have repeatedly shown that conventional communications can fail. In those situations, ham radio remains one of the most resilient forms of communication. That is precisely why the ARRL emergency motto is "When All Else Fails®".

The value of emergency communications is not merely theoretical. Modern studies on disaster response communication networks continue to highlight the importance of independent and resilient systems in scenarios where traditional infrastructure collapses.

The social and human side of Field Day

One of the most special elements of ARRL Field Day is the human atmosphere that builds around it. For many hams, Field Day is the most anticipated weekend of the year. Entire clubs get together to cook, camp, share experiences, and enjoy ham radio out in the field.

In ham radio communities, the event often becomes a mix of picnic, campout, technical lab, and educational activity. Many participants fondly remember their first HF contacts during a Field Day or the first time they put up a portable antenna.

It also serves as a bridge between generations. Veteran operators share their knowledge with younger hams interested in technology, electronics, and communications. In a time when many interactions happen exclusively through screens, Field Day offers a hands-on, real world experience of applied science and technology.

The event also has a strong community outreach component. Many stations invite the general public, local officials, emergency management agencies, and media. The goal is to show that ham radio is not just an old hobby, but a modern technical discipline with real world applications.





Photo by: ARRL

The meaning of Field Day for modern ham radio

In the 21st century, some people might wonder why ham radio is still relevant when we have smartphones, satellite internet, and instant global networks. However, it is precisely the complexity of modern communications that keeps ham radio important.

Commercial networks depend on extensive infrastructure such as cell towers, servers, fiber optics, and complex power systems. In contrast, a ham can get on the air using solar power, a portable battery, and a makeshift antenna in just a few minutes.

Field Day symbolizes that technological independence. It also represents the experimental spirit of ham radio. Every year, thousands of operators test new antennas, digital setups, portable stations, and operating strategies.

In addition, the event inspires learning in STEM fields (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics). Young participants gain hands-on experience with ionospheric propagation, electronics, antenna design, and radio frequency physics.

Expectations for ARRL Field Day 2026

The ARRL has announced that the main theme for Field Day 2026 will be “Amateur Radio: A National Resource.” This focus aims to highlight the role of ham radio as a public service tool,

community preparedness and technological education.

The 2026 event is expected to see massive participation, with more than 30,000 operators across the United States and Canada. Organizers anticipate a strong emphasis on public outreach, educational demonstrations, and operations powered by alternative energy sources. Another important aspect will be the growing presence of digital modes and modern technologies. Many groups will likely incorporate digital networks, satellite communications, ultralight portable systems, and hybrid setups combining traditional radio with modern computing technologies.

There is also strong expectation around participation from new generations of operators. In recent years, many clubs have increased their efforts to attract young people, students, and entire families. The use of GOTA stations and educational activities will continue to be key in ensuring the future of ham radio.

A living tradition

After more than 90 years of history, ARRL Field Day remains one of the greatest symbols of global ham radio. Its longevity shows that amateur radio continues to evolve without losing its core foundations: service, experimentation, learning, and community.

Every improvised antenna raised in a park, every battery powered station, and every contact made during the event represents far more than simple radio signals. It represents the human ability to communicate even under the most difficult conditions.

In a society increasingly dependent on automated systems and complex networks, Field Day reminds us that technical knowledge, creativity, and human cooperation still carry immense value. For thousands of hams, the fourth full weekend of June is not just an annual activity; it is a celebration of everything amateur radio stands for. For 2026, the event promises to continue strengthening that tradition, inspiring new operators, and proving that even in the digital age, the magic of radio is still very much alive. For more official information about the event, visit ARRL Field Day and the official results and logging portal ARRL Field Day Portal.



SCHEDULED EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES FOR JUNE 2026

Conventions, hamfests, and in-person events

**SPECIAL
EVENTS**

- **SEA-PAC Ham Convention – June 5–7, 2026 (approx.)** – Seaside, Oregon, USA. One of the most important hamfests in the Pacific Northwest, featuring vendors, license exams, technical forums, and local club activities.
- **Ham Radio Friedrichshafen – June 26–28, 2026**
– Friedrichshafen, Germany. Ham Radio Friedrichshafen The largest amateur radio fair in Europe, featuring international exhibitions, SDR technology, satellites, conferences, and a strong presence of manufacturers.
- **ARRL Field Day – June 27–28, 2026** – USA and Canada. ARRL Field Day. An annual emergency preparedness event where portable stations operate on HF/VHF to practice communications under simulated crisis conditions.
- **Mid-South Hamfest – June 12–13, 2026** – Tennessee, USA. Regional hamfest featuring equipment vendors, technical forums, license exams, and local radio club activities.

Operaciones en el aire / especiales

- **Special summer callsigns (Europe and USA)– June 2026**
Special prefix stations active in various countries to commemorate summer activities, award programs, and club events (including frequent POTA/SOTA activations).
- **POTA / SOTA Summer Activation Season – All June 2026** –
Intensive Parks on the Air and Summits on the Air activations in parks and mountains across the USA, Europe, and the Caribbean, taking advantage of improved propagation conditions.
- **ARRL Field Day Activations – June 27–28, 2026** Thousands of special event stations across the USA and Canada operating on HF, VHF, and digital modes as part of the largest simulated emergency exercise in amateur radio.

By Yanira Maldonado, WP4QOE

Female Frequency

Beyond the microphone,
how do you build a real community] in amateur
radio?

Amateur radio is much more than equipment, antennas,
and contacts.

It is community.

Behind every callsign is a person. A story. A different
motivation for being on frequency. And although we often
focus on the technical side, it is the quality of our
relationships that truly defines the experience within the
hobby.

Not all spaces in amateur radio feel the same.

There are frequencies where the atmosphere is welcoming,
where participation is encouraged, where people teach
with patience, and where every operator, regardless of
experience level, feels valued.

And there are also spaces where the opposite happens.
Closed groups. Conversations dominated by a few voices.
Lack of inclusion. Out of place comments. Environments
where some prefer to listen in silence rather than speak
up.

The difference between the two is not the equipment.

It is the culture.

Building a real community in amateur radio requires
intention. It does not happen by accident. It is formed
through small daily decisions: how we speak, how we
include others, how we respond to those who are just
getting started.

A strong community is not the one with the most
members.

It is the one that makes its members want to stay.

And that requires something fundamental: active
inclusion.

Photos by: ylrl.net



Inclusion is not just allowing someone to be present. It is inviting them to participate. It is making space in technical conversations. It is giving others the opportunity to learn, to make mistakes, and to grow. It is recognizing that at some point, we were all new.

Leadership in amateur radio is not always about titles. It is about attitude. It is found in the ham who takes the time to explain. In the operator who moderates a frequency with respect. In the one who makes a first time caller feel comfortable on the air.

In the one who chooses to raise the tone of the environment instead of reinforcing negative dynamics.

Women, in particular, can contribute a great deal to this aspect. Not only through participation, but through the building of more organized, more collaborative, and more human spaces. Spaces where communication is not only technical, but also intentional.

Because a healthy community is not measured solely by the number of contacts made, but by the quality of the connections built.

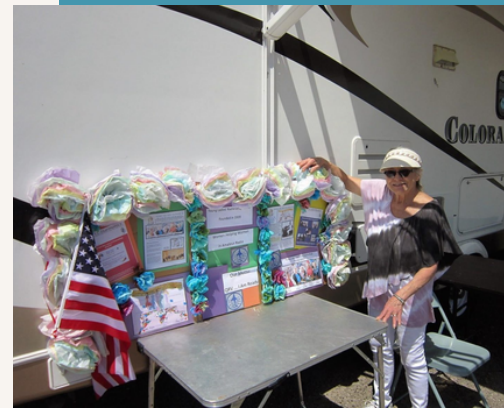
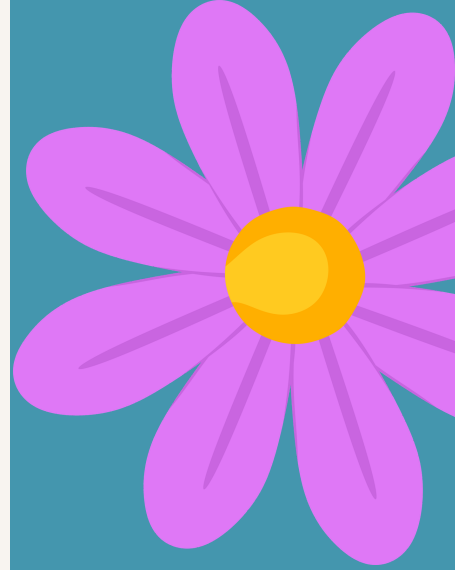
Today more than ever, amateur radio needs communities that inspire, educate, and retain those who arrive with enthusiasm.

The growth of the hobby depends on it. And this is a shared responsibility.

Each of us has the power to influence the environment created on frequency. In every contact, in every conversation, in every space where we choose to participate. The question is not only what kind of community we want to have. It is what we are doing to build it.

Because at the end of the day, amateur radio is not sustained by signals alone.

It is sustained by people.



IS THE ICOM IC-7100 STILL RELEVANT IN 2026?

Versatile,
reliable,
compact



Photos by: Icom .com

Por: Equipo Editorial SWR



The Icom IC-7100 integrates HF, VHF, and UHF in a single unit, offering great flexibility for the modern ham radio operator.



Integrated D-STAR technology

A transceiver that marked a transition

In the world of amateur radio, the Icom IC-7100 has established itself as a rig that marked the transition between traditional transceivers and modern designs with touchscreen displays and more integrated digital interfaces. Although it was introduced more than a decade ago, in 2026 it is still actively used by many operators, keeping the debate about its relevance alive.

Full coverage and all-in-one design

The IC-7100 is a multimode transceiver covering HF, 6 meters, 2 meters, and 70 centimeters, with output power up to 100 watts on HF, 50 watts on VHF, and 35 watts on UHF. Its compact design with a tilt touchscreen and detachable control head made it especially popular for mobile stations and space-limited setups. It also supports modes such as SSB, CW, AM, FM, and D-STAR, giving it strong operational flexibility.

Performance and DSP technology

One of the IC-7100's strongest features is its intermediate frequency DSP architecture, enabling digital filtering, noise reduction, and solid receive performance for its generation. It also includes built-in USB connectivity, which makes it very convenient for modern digital modes such as FT8, Winlink, and other computer-based systems.



Ideal for POTA and field operation



- HF / 6m / 2m / 70cm all-in-one
- Power output: 100W HF, 50W VHF, 35W UHF
- Modes: SSB, CW, AM, FM, and D-STAR
- Tilt color touchscreen display
- IF DSP with noise reduction
- USB connection for digital modes
- Detachable control head design (mobile use)
- Large memory capacity with over 500 channels

Practical use in day-to-day operation

In practice, the Icom IC-7100 still stands out as a true “shack-in-a-box.” Its ability to cover multiple bands from a single unit makes it ideal for activities like POTA, mobile operation, field expeditions, and emergency stations, where simplicity and efficiency are essential.

Touchscreen and user experience

Its touchscreen interface was innovative for its time and still remains functional today. It allows operators to change bands, modes, and settings directly, reducing the need for complex physical controls. While it does not match the fluidity or responsiveness of modern SDR systems, it remains practical for everyday operation.

Limitations in the SDR era

However, in 2026 the IC-7100 also shows its limitations. It does not offer a real-time waterfall display or the advanced visual experience found in modern SDR transceivers like the IC-7300 or IC-9700. Its interface, while effective, can feel less modern by today’s standards. Additionally, as a discontinued model, parts availability is becoming a factor to consider.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the IC-7100 remains relevant in 2026. It does not compete directly with newer SDR radios in terms of interface or advanced visualization, but it continues to be an extremely versatile, reliable, and practical rig. For many hams, it is still one of the most complete all-in-one solutions available for a modern station.

EL MURMULLO DE UNA SOLA FASE

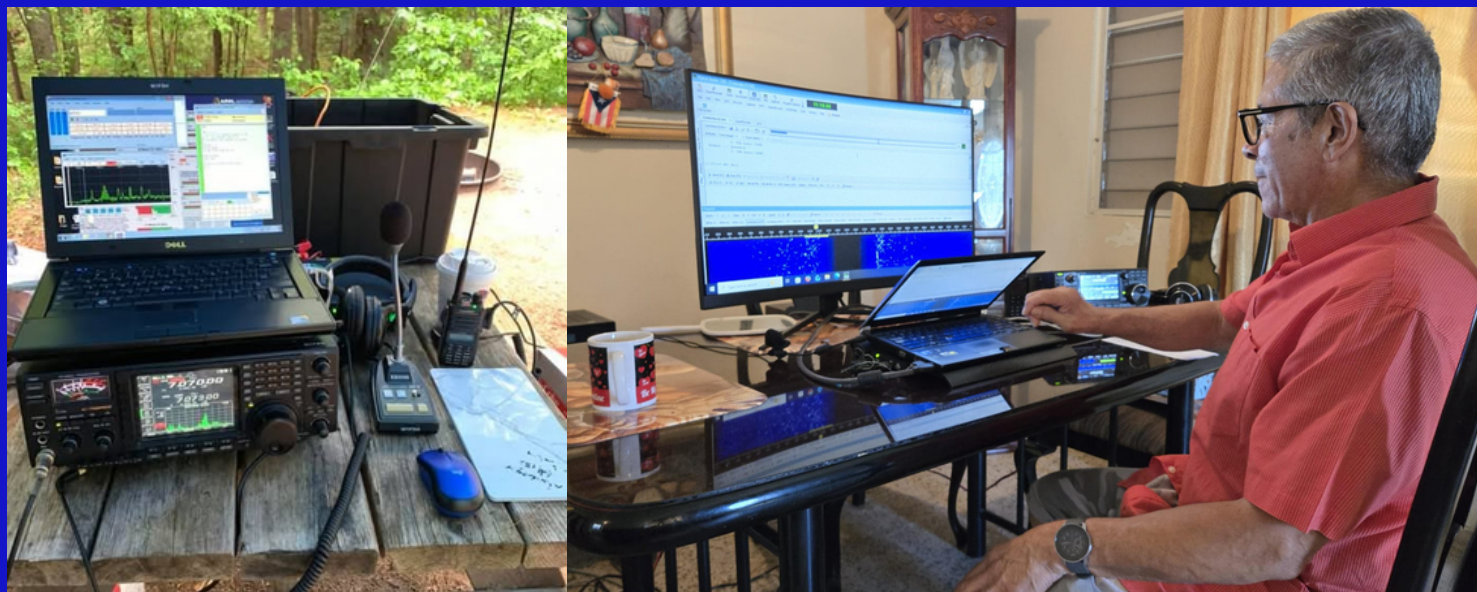


Photo by:W1FSH

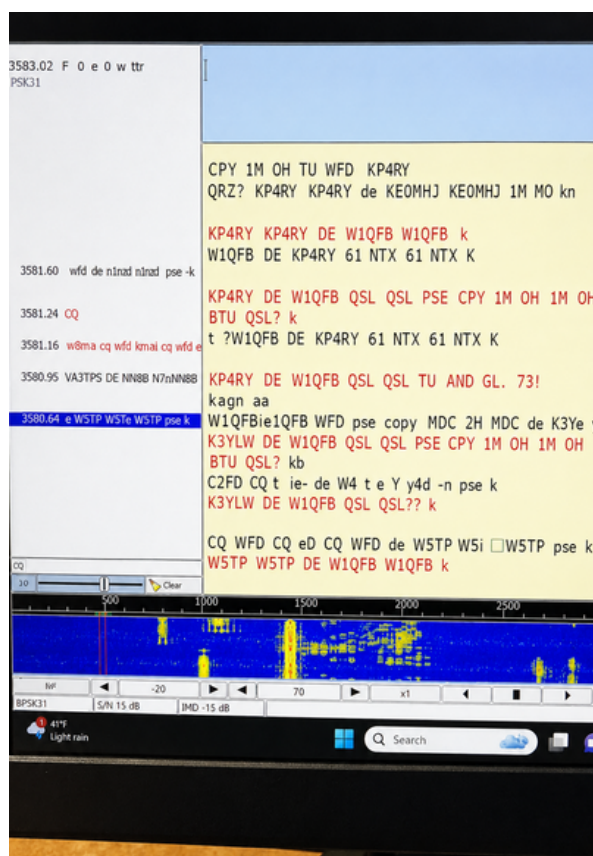
SLOW-PACED CONVERSATIONS WITH PSK₃₁

By: Abimael Padro KP4RY

The first time I heard about PSK31, I thought it was one of those digital modes reserved for engineers with a notebook full of formulas. “Phase Shift Keying at 31.25 baud” sounded intimidating. However, once you sit down at the radio and actually try it, you realize it looks complicated, but it is easy. And once you understand it, it becomes one of those modes you do not forget.

I remember a particularly quiet night on 20 meters. I had already finished my activities for the day and decided to turn on the rig to see what was in the air. Propagation was steady, and the FLDigi waterfall showed several thin lines, perfectly defined, like small strands of light drawn across the screen.

Obviously, that was PSK31.

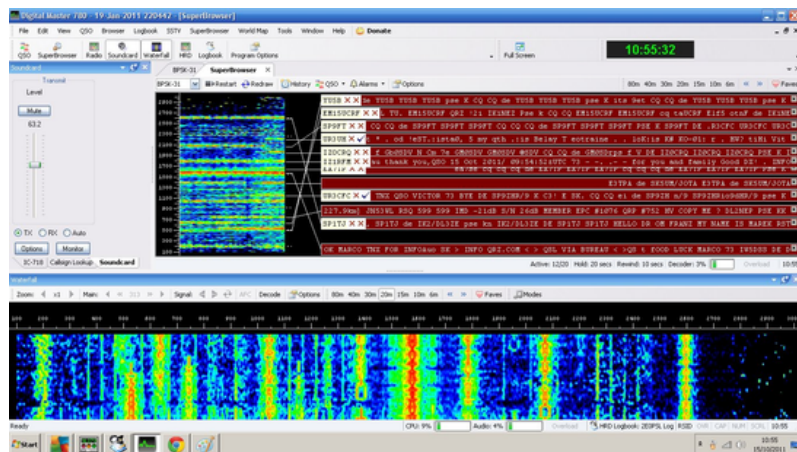


There is something elegant about this mode. While other digital systems exchange automated and standardized messages, PSK31 allows operators to have relaxed conversations, type freely, and preserve the human side of Amateur Radio. That is definitely one of its greatest strengths.

The operating principle is quite ingenious. Instead of transmitting complex tones or long sequences, PSK31 uses phase shifts in the signal to represent each character. All of this happens while occupying only about 31 Hz of bandwidth, making it an extremely efficient mode.

That night, I clicked on one of the traces in the waterfall, and immediately the following appeared on the screen:

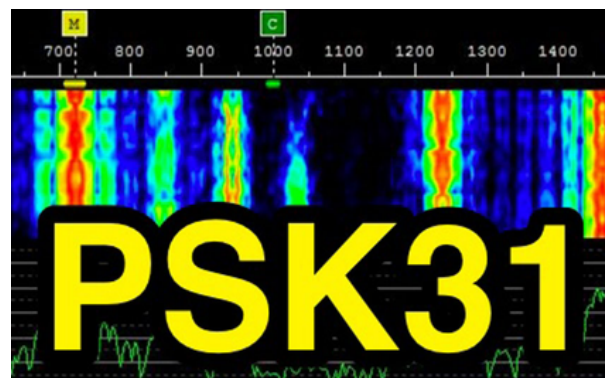
CQ CQ CQ DE I2... I2...K



The text was clear, clean, and continuous. No distorted characters or uncertain decoding. It felt like receiving an electronic letter directly from Italy.

I answered with my callsign, and only a few seconds later the QSO began to flow naturally.

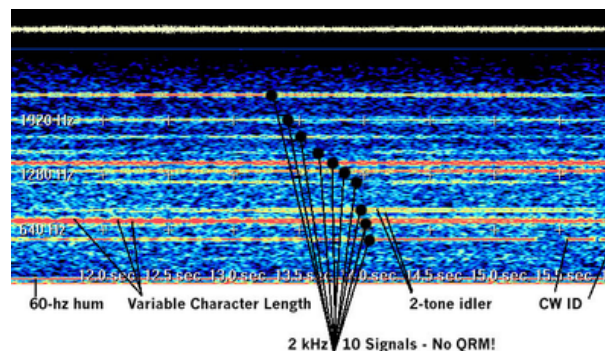
He told me about his station, about a simple dipole installed on the roof of his house, and about his appreciation for the classic digital modes. I told him about Puerto Rico, my antennas, and my interest in experimenting with different communication systems. As we continued typing back and forth, it felt as if the technology itself disappeared, leaving only the exchange between two hams separated by thousands of miles.

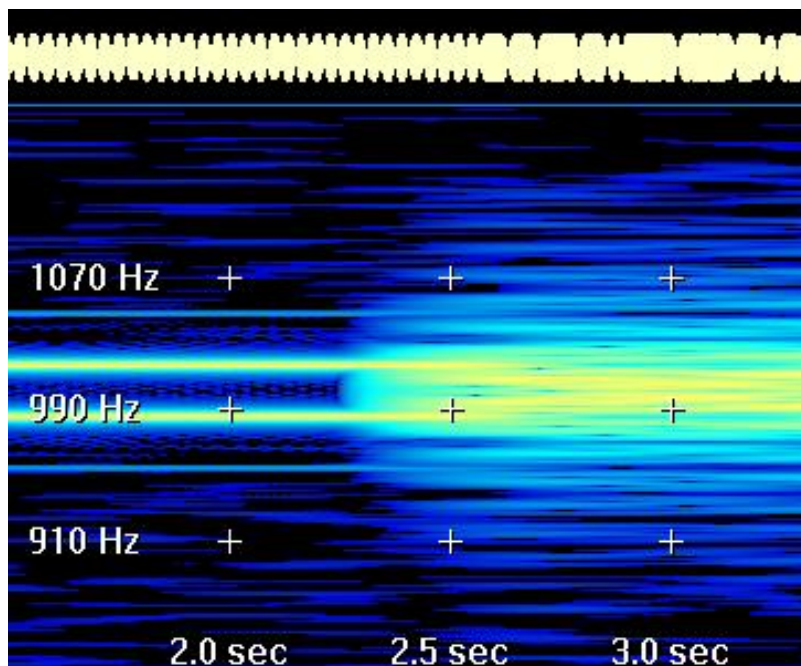


Practicing PSK31 does not require a complicated station. A stable HF transceiver, an audio interface, and software such as FLDigi are more than enough. The setup process is fairly straightforward.

First, the radio is connected to the computer through an interface or directly via USB if the rig supports it. Then FLDigi is opened and the BPSK31 mode is selected. After that, the audio levels are adjusted carefully to avoid overdriving the signal. In this mode, a clean signal is far more important than running high power.

I usually operate with 20 or 30 watts, and in many cases that is more than enough to achieve excellent DX contacts. Of course, the real secret is keeping the audio properly adjusted and the transmitter's ALC as low as possible.





The traditional PSK31 frequency on the 20-meter band is 14.070 MHz. When tuning across that portion of the band, it is common to see numerous thin traces on the waterfall display. Each one represents a station transmitting text in real time. All you have to do is click on a signal to begin reading the conversation.

If you want to call CQ, you simply type your message into the transmit window and press "Transmit." The software converts every letter into a sequence of phase shifts, and the transceiver sends that information over the air. It may sound complicated, but once you see it in action, it becomes surprisingly easy.

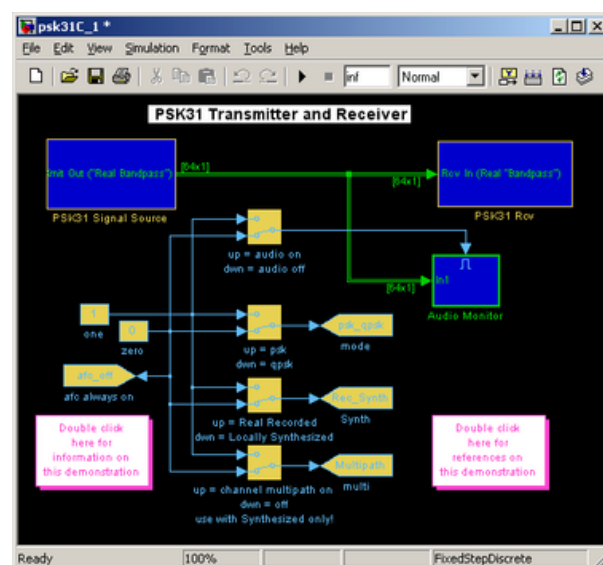
What impressed me the most that night was how natural the exchange felt. There was no automation or preprogrammed messaging. Every word was typed by the operator on the other side of the ocean. There were pauses, spontaneous comments, and that relaxed pace that invites you to truly enjoy the QSO.

PSK31 definitely preserves the classic spirit of Amateur Radio.

When we finished the QSO, I stayed there watching the waterfall for several more minutes. Dozens of traces continued appearing and disappearing, each one carrying its own story, each one connecting hams who shared the same passion.

Con el paso del tiempo he utilizado muchos modos digitales, algunos más modernos y otros más sofisticados. Sin embargo, siempre regreso al PSK31. Hay en él una combinación muy especial de eficiencia, simplicidad y calidez humana.

Obviamente, no es el modo más rápido ni el más popular en la actualidad, pero sigue siendo uno de los más agradables para conversar y aprender.



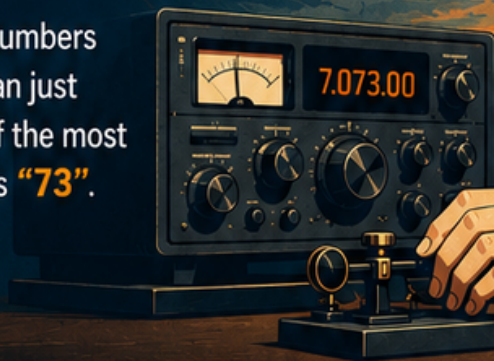
And every time I see those thin glowing traces across the screen, I remember that first night when I discovered that, with only a few hertz of bandwidth and a keyboard, it was possible to carry on a calm conversation with a fellow ham on the other side of the world.

That experience definitely confirmed for me that Amateur Radio is not simply about transmitting signals, but about creating real human connections through the airwaves.



Why Do Operators Say 73?

In amateur radio, numbers can mean more than just frequencies. One of the most famous examples is “73”.



SWR
THE VOICE OF
WORLDWIDE RADIO
AMATEURS

THE SHORT ANSWER:

It means best regards.

But the story behind this simple sign-off is a tradition that goes back more than a century.

In the early days of telegraphy, numbers were often used as code words to save time and reduce errors. The number 73 was assigned to the phrase “**best regards**” in many telegraphic code books.

When amateur radio operators adopted Morse code and Q-codes, “73” naturally became part of our language.

A TRADITION THAT CONNECTS US

Today, when an operator ends a QSO with “73”, it’s more than just protocol—it’s a way of sending friendship across the airwaves.



NEXT TIME YOU HEAR “73”...

remember you’re receiving more than a signal—you’re receiving a tradition.

QUICK FACTS



“73” has been used in radio communication for over 100 years.



Other common Morse code prosigns include “88” (love and kisses) and “99” (go ahead).



Traditions like “73” are part of what makes amateur radio so special.



WHERE THE
EQUIPMENT TELLS
STORIES

THE SECOND-HAND MARKETS

By: Julio Mercado WP4PUX

If there is one thing that truly makes me happy in this world, besides a good pile-up on 20 meters and a strong cup of coffee in the morning, it is ham radio swap meets and second-hand radio markets. Those magical places, sometimes under tents and other times out in the open beneath a blazing sun hot enough to melt SO-239 connectors, where old rigs never really die... they simply change owners and keep fighting their way across the airwaves!

I have seen everything there: from a transceiver that "only needs a minor repair" (translation: it will not power up even with prayers), to genuine gems that look as if they came straight out of a time capsule. But beyond the equipment itself, these swap meets are the perfect combination of friendship, bargaining, nostalgia, and a whole lot of history.



Fotos de: Radio Bunker

My story at a flea market I will never forget

I remember one time at a hamfest. I arrived early, like any good bargain hunter, with an empty backpack and a heart full of hope. As soon as I got there, I saw a table with an old HF rig. The seller, a serious-looking man, told me:

-“Works perfectly, the only thing is that sometimes the display gets a bit creative...”
Translated into real ham radio language: the display does whatever it wants, whenever it wants, and you end up praying to understand it.

Behind me, another ham shows up, looks at the radio, and whispers to me:

-“Julio, that radio is like old coax... it looks fine on the outside, but inside it is already starting to give you trouble.”

We laughed so much that the seller ended up lowering the price just because of the conversation. And that is exactly what happened: I took the radio home, but I also gained a new friend.

That is the magic of these markets. It is not just buying and selling, it is connecting.



For the buyer: how to avoid ending up “modulated in white noise”

Buying used equipment can be a wonderful experience... or a dangerous adventure. Here are some recommendations from experience (and a few financial scars):



1. Test before paying

If you can power the equipment on, do it. Listen, transmit if possible, check buttons, VFO, display. A silent radio is not always a good radio... sometimes it is just a deaf one.

2. Ask without fear

How long was it stored? Has it had any repairs? Any drops or impacts? In Amateur Radio, questions save money.

3. Check connectors and physical condition

A rig can look beautiful on the outside and be “built out of faith” on the inside.

4. Bring a fellow ham with you

Two sets of eyes see more than one... and two brains prevent impulsive buys.

5. If it seems too cheap...

It probably is. And not in your favor.

For the seller: how to sell without losing a friendship

Selling equipment is also an art. It is not just about setting a price and waiting for miracles.

1. Be honest

A radio with issues is not junk... but it is not “almost new” either. Transparency builds trust in Amateur Radio.

2. Clean the equipment

You do not need to perform cosmetic surgery on it, but a clean rig sells better than one that looks like it survived a category 6 hurricane.



3. Set a reasonable price

Do your research on the market. It is not "sentimental price + memories + the coffee you drank with it."

4. Demonstrate that it works

If you can show it operating, you increase buyer confidence and reduce extreme bargaining.

5. Be kind

Amateur Radio is a big family. Today you sell... tomorrow you might be the one buying.

The true value of these markets

Beyond the equipment itself, these spaces are meeting points. There, DX stories are shared, anecdotes about antennas that almost launched into the sky are told, and friendships last for years.

I have seen people walk away with a rig under their arm and a smile bigger than a well-installed repeater antenna.

And something curious happens in these markets: sometimes you do not find the radio you were looking for... but you find something better: a conversation, a friendship, or a new story to tell on the next frequency.



So the next time you hear "flea market" or "hamfest", get your backpack ready, your patience ready, and your best smile on. Because you are not just going there to buy or sell equipment; you are going there to socialize, to learn, to haggle with respect, and above all, to share stories that are often worth more than any radio on the table.

Because in Amateur Radio, as I often say jokingly among fellow operators:

"The best rig is not always the most expensive one... it is the one that makes you get back on the air wanting to say: QRZ again!"

And if at the end of the day you walk away with a good piece of gear, a good deal, and a couple of new friendships... then it was not just a market, it was a good day of radio.

73 de

WP4PUX Julio Mercado



Dipoles, Yagis, and J-Pole antennas

Your survival kit!

Dipoles, Yagis, and J-Pole: Your survival kit!

Today we move into local action. The VHF and UHF bands (2 meters, 70 centimeters) are the playground of many Amateur Radio operators. They are agile, direct, and perfect for city-to-city contacts, repeaters, and experimentation.

But an antenna for these frequencies is not “a less important antenna.” Quite the opposite. This is where efficiency and location matter almost everything. Today we uncover the three designs that form the practical ham’s survival kit: the dipole, the Yagi, and the J-Pole. Let’s go!



Photo by: FB Charlie Ortiz

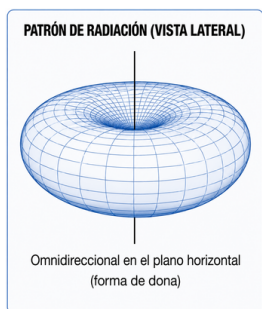
1. The VHF/UHF dipole: the classic, reimaged



In VHF/UHF the “half-wave” dipole comes back to life with advantages. At 146 MHz (2m), a dipole measures approximately 1 meter from end to end. Very manageable and fun!

Why is it special here?

- Extreme simplicity: Two pieces of copper tubing or rod, a central insulator (often an SO-239 connector), and that’s it. You can build one in an afternoon.
- Omnidirectional pattern in its plane: Imagine a giant doughnut lying flat, with the antenna in the hole. This means it radiates and receives well in all horizontal directions, perfect if you want to talk to multiple repeaters or stations in different directions.
- Real gain: In VHF/UHF, a simple half-wave dipole already has respectable gain over a quarter-wave antenna (like the rubber duck antennas on handheld radios).
- The clever trick of the folded dipole: Very common in these bands, it is a dipole whose ends are bent back and connected, improving bandwidth and impedance. That “T” of aluminum you often see on rooftops for digital TV... is actually a folded dipole for UHF!



Ideal for: Your first homemade fixed antenna, a weekend project, a temporary antenna for activations, or an economical omnidirectional base station antenna.

2. The Yagi: The directional harpoon



If the dipole is a flashlight, the Yagi is a laser. It is the antenna for "I want that specific repeater." You have definitely seen it: it looks like an aluminum ladder pointing toward the horizon.

Its anatomy is interesting:

- Driven element (dipole): The heart of the antenna, the only part connected to the coaxial cable.
- Reflector: A longer rod BEHIND the dipole. Like a mirror, it prevents the signal from going backward.
- Directors: Shorter rods IN FRONT of the dipole. They act like "lenses," focusing and guiding the energy forward.

Each added element increases gain and directivity. A 3-element Yagi is good; a 12-element one on 70 cm is a cannon that can reach repeaters 100 km away or more.

Its superpowers

- High gain: It concentrates your power in one direction, multiplying its effect.
- Interference rejection: Because it is so directional, it ignores unwanted signals coming from the sides or from behind.

Its kryptonite

- You must aim it: It needs a rotor or at least manual orientation. It is not suitable for talking to everyone in every direction at once.
- More complex: Building a Yagi requires precise calculations of element lengths and spacing.

3. The J-Pole: Elegance made into an antenna



Photo by: ko4aje.com

The J-Pole is a discreet hero. It looks like a simple straight tube (a half-wave radiator) with a shorter "arm" shaped like a "J". But it is a marvel of engineering.

How does this invention work?

It is a half-wave antenna fed at one end. The "J" section (the shorter segment and the wire forming it) acts as a kind of impedance transformer that matches your 50-ohm coaxial cable to the high impedance found at the end of a dipole. It sounds complex, but the result is fantastic.

Its key advantages:

The J-Pole antenna stands out for being omnidirectional and offering higher gain than a quarter-wave vertical antenna, since it concentrates the signal better toward the horizon instead of wasting it into the sky. In addition, it is simple to build using basic materials such as copper tubing, it has a wide bandwidth that makes tuning easier and allows operation across multiple frequencies, and it is very versatile, being suitable both for fixed installations and for portable operations or use with handheld radios.

Conclusion: Which one do you choose?

- Are you a generalist who wants to hear everything around you? Then go for a J-Pole or a vertical dipole.
- Are you a hunter chasing a distant target? Clearly a Yagi.
- Are you an experimenter who enjoys inventing or building things? No doubt about it, start with a dipole, then move on to a J-Pole, and finally dare to build a Yagi.



Radio Scouting at Jamborette 2026

When the adventure of Scouting meets amateur radio in Cabo Rojo, Puerto Rico.

During Jamborette 2026, held at Balneario de Boquerón, amateur radio opened a real door to science, communication, service, and generational continuity.

In the Scouting movement, learning by doing is not simply an inspiring phrase. It is a way of life. Every camp, every challenge, and every shared experience can become a lesson that remains long after the tents are taken down.

During Jamborette 2026, held from April 24 to 26 at Balneario de Boquerón in Cabo Rojo, Puerto Rico, this philosophy took on a very special dimension when amateur radio became part of the youth experience through Radio Scouting activities.

Organized under the theme "Survivor: Overcome, Adapt, and Triumph," the event brought together more than 2,000 young people, volunteer leaders, families, and community members. Within that atmosphere of learning and challenge, amateur radio found a natural place.

The Radio Scouting station offered participants far more than a simple equipment demonstration. For many young people, it was a first direct introduction to the world of radio communications: antennas, transmitters, receivers, live contacts, and the fundamental concepts of communication.

Beyond the connections that were made, the greatest impact was human: to spark curiosity, open pathways, and demonstrate that amateur radio remains a strong bridge between generations and cultures.

“ More than 2,000 participants. 20 young people began the Radio Merit Badge. A clear signal toward the future.”



Aerial view of the Jamborette 2026 campsite at Balneario de Boquerón, Cabo Rojo, Puerto Rico.





Operators and youth in Scouting share a hands-on learning experience around the Radio Scouting station.

From Demonstration to Discovery

Radio Scouting showed that amateur radio can be presented to new generations in a way that is accessible, practical, and deeply inspiring.

According to Luis Cintrón, WP4RQA, the activity included equipment exhibits, hands-on demonstrations, and guidance for units interested in integrating the radio program into their future agendas. New units were also added to the contact list for upcoming Radio Scouting activities.

One of the most significant achievements was that around 20 young people began their Radio Merit Badge, a notable figure compared with the usual average of three to five young people in similar activities. More than a number, this represents interest, curiosity, and a real opportunity to bring a new generation closer to the world of amateur radio.

During the day, participants had contact with different areas of radio communication: SIMPLEX, HF, GMRS, repeater communication, repeater relay, STEM intro, introduction to JOTA-JOTI, and foxhunt activities.

Although the Radio Scouting activities were limited to Saturday and took place outside the main core of the program, the result was described as a complete success.

The experience made it clear that amateur radio still has the power to spark curiosity, teach service, and open paths of mentorship for the future.



Radio Scouting Highlights — Jamborete 2026



20 youth began the Radio Merit Badge



Contacts and hands-on practice in SIMPLEX, HF, GMRS, and repeater operation



Foxhunt, STEM intro, and JOTA-JOTI orientation



New units interested in future activities



Outdoor activities reinforced the component of exploration, tracking, and communication.

HAM RADIO *Zone*



Trending

Ricardo Rodrigues, known in Amateur Radio as PY2PT and also N1BR in the United States, is a prominent Brazilian amateur radio operator based in São Paulo, Brazil. He began his amateur radio journey in 1994 and, over more than three decades, has

developed an impressive career in DXing, contests, and international expeditions.

He has participated in well-known DXpeditions around the world and operated from multiple entities and special event stations. His passion for amateur radio has led him to be part of major contest teams, collaborate with operators from different countries, and become a Volunteer Examiner in the United States.

Ricardo continues to actively promote the hobby, inspiring new generations of amateur radio operators and keeping alive the spirit of global communication and international friendship that defines amateur radio.

SWR



Photo by: W4WTS